

Trust, Testimony, and Reasons for Belief¹

Rebecca Wallbank and Andrew Reisner

[Penultimate draft, but no substantive changes are expected. Feel free to cite as appropriate.

This text is forthcoming in *Epistemic Duties: New Arguments, New Angles* edited by Kevin McCain and Scott Stapleford on Routledge.]

0. INTRODUCTION

Recent work on trust divides it into two broad categories that are sometimes thought to be relevant to determining what one has most epistemic reason to believe² with respect to the testimony of trusted testifiers. One category is *non-evidential trust*, which is characterised by an affective attitude of optimism in an individual's good nature such that one forms the disposition to believe what she says and where this optimism is generated irrespective of evidential considerations.³ The other kind of trust, *evidential trust*, involves an attitude of some kind,⁴ one which also disposes one to believe what an individual says, yet which is generated because one takes it that there is sufficient evidence that that individual is reliable in general or in the relevant domain.⁵

Influential literature about duties and friendship suggests that non-evidential trust is an appropriate attitude that reflects one's genuine, but purely pragmatic, reasons for belief in the context of those relationships.⁶ Evidential trust, on the other hand, has a fundamentally epistemic character. However, at least at first blush, it seems ill suited to making a contribution to the epistemic status of beliefs acquired via testimony. This is because evidential trust seems to be, and we shall argue is, only epistemically justified if there are independent evidential reasons to believe what an individual is saying (i.e. that those individuals are reliably correct in their judgements in the relevant domain). Thus there is a challenge for those who wish to ar-

gue that testimonial trust in some way makes the trusted testimony contribute to what one has most epistemic reason to believe. Put succinctly, testimonial trust appears to be either epistemically impotent and perhaps even contraindicative, or epistemically redundant.

We believe that this conclusion may be hasty and propose a revised account of the role of testimonial trust on which there are sometimes non-evidential epistemic reasons to accept testimony from a trusted testifier, even when the underlying evidential support is not sufficiently strong to give one an equally strong reason to accept the testimony of a non-trusted testifier. We propose a novel kind of reason, a *reason of epistemic facilitation*, that is generated by non-evidential testimonial trust in certain contexts. Our tentative conclusion is that there are epistemic reasons for some beliefs arising from the testimony of trusted testifiers that does not depend on the evidential value of the testimony.

The chapter is structured as follows. §1 provides an overview of the notion of *trust* as it is understood in the current literature. §2 explores a common class of theoretical assumptions about non-evidential trust, what we call ‘attitude-liability assumptions’, and argues that they should not be included in the correct account of non-evidential trust. In §3 we offer a sketch of what we take to be the correct account of trust. §4 discusses the kinds of reasons we can have for trusting and considers what sorts of reasons may and may not be provided by testimonial trust. In §5 we develop the outlines of an account of a novel type of epistemic reason, a *reason of epistemic facilitation*, that we claim may be generated by having the attitude of non-evidential trust in certain circumstances. We offer some concluding thoughts in §6.

1. The Basics of Trust

The term ‘trust’ is used in various different ways. For example, you might trust a clock to tell the time or politicians to fulfill their commitments. Sometimes we even speak of trusting certain people *simpliciter*. Our discussion is not intended to encompass all reasonable uses of the word ‘trust’ in English, but rather to consider a much smaller family of attitudes. Just what this family of attitudes is will become clearer presently, but we can begin by noting that the relevant kinds of attitude have two objects: person X trusts person Y to ϕ . More specifically, since we are focused on testimonial trust, ‘ ϕ ’ in these cases is *to communicate about matters within a certain domain sincerely and competently*.⁷ We distinguish two broad categories of testimonial trust: non-evidential and evidential. In order to explicate these two different kinds of trust, it will be helpful to begin by setting out what they have in common.

In its most general form, trust involves a certain type of interest, dependence, and expectation. The notion of *interest* captures the sense in which person X at the very least holds that the occurrence of ϕ is, or would be, in some sense positive. The notion of *dependence* captures the sense in which it is the case that for ϕ to occur individual X in some relevant way needs individual Y.⁸ The notion of *expectation* at the very least captures the idea that trust involves a predictive expectation: X expects that Y will do ϕ .⁹ What differentiates non-evidential and evidential trust lies mainly in what motivates this predictive expectation.

The distinguishing feature of evidential trust is that the expectation that Y will ϕ arises as a result of believing that Y will ϕ on account of the evidence that Y will ϕ , rather than from some non-evidentially dependent feature of the trust itself. X’s expectation that Y will communicate *c* within domain *d* sincerely and competently is based on evidence derived from past experience used to make epistemically appropriate inferences about future behaviour. For example, X might evidentially trust that the expert snooker player Y will pocket the red ball in a particular situation solely because she has never failed to do so in that situation in the past.

What we want to highlight is that X need not trust Y in consideration of Y's interests, nor need she expect that Y will show consideration or respect for her, or even know that she exists! This kind of trust can straightforwardly be given to inanimate objects as well as people.¹⁰ It arises out an evidential assessment. One could imagine a reductivist account of evidential trust that analysed *evidential trust* in terms of the combination of the presence of evidential considerations and (an) appropriate belief(s). We take it that this analysis of evidential trust would be unattractive to philosophers who wish to argue that evidential trust itself adds or constitutes a further epistemic reason to believe that to which a trusted testifier testifies. Thus we assume here that evidential trust should be understood as some sort of further attitude, the presence of which may be thought to add or constitute a further epistemic reason. We shall not speculate, however, about what sort of attitude this would be.

Non-Evidential Trust is different to evidential trust in structure and one might say spirit. Structurally it necessarily contains both a predictive expectation (like evidential trust) and a normative expectation (unlike evidential trust). It is this normative component, an expectation that the trusted ought or has reason to ϕ which motivates the predictive expectation that they will in fact ϕ . This attitude can occur in the face of evidence suggesting that the trusted individual will not ϕ . And strikingly the possession of supporting evidence that she will ϕ is not only unnecessary for this kind of trust to hold, but the act of searching for such evidence is constitutively a hindrance to forming and holding non-evidential trust.

2. Some Problems about Attitude Liability Assumptions and a Solution

There are several puzzles about non-evidential trust that arise for the leading accounts due, so we argue, to what may be called 'attitude-liability assumptions'. On several influential views

about trust, there are attitudes that one is liable to form when one non-evidentially trusts someone. It is, for example, widely assumed that Y's non-evidentially trustworthy behaviour is something that X feels is owed to her, and Y's failure to behave trustworthily can prompt X to feel betrayed.^{11, 12} The idea is that whilst we may be disappointed by the failure of shelves to support a vase or by the failure of clocks to tell the time, we would not be liable to feel betrayed by the shelves or the clocks. This, it is claimed, suggests that we don't trust inanimate objects in the richer, non-evidential, sense of trust. It is also widely assumed that in circumstances where a trusted person does as expected, the truster should feel grateful.¹³

Both assumptions seem strange to us for reasons we articulate below, and they expose several points of ambiguity in the accounts that make use of them. First, it is not clear whether the claims in the literature are about the truster being *betrayed* or *feeling betrayed*. Most theorists seem to have both in mind. They capture the issue in terms of an *appropriate liability* for the truster *to feel* betrayed if the trusted person fails to act as expected. A second, connected point of ambiguity concerns whether theorists intend to claim that *all cases* of non-evidential trust appropriately generate a liability in X to feel betrayal if Y fails to meet X's expectations, or whether the claim is that in *some* cases the truster is liable to attitudes of betrayal (this differs from evidential trust in which there are no such cases). Our reading of many of the influential theorists (including Hawley, Holton, and Jones) is that they implicitly are making a claim about the attitudes which X is always liable to feel when Y fails to meet X's expectations. Thus violations of trust-based expectations always appropriately engender an attitude of betrayal.¹⁴

Yet this seems wrong. In order to appropriately engender an attitude of betrayal, it seems to us that: first, someone must have made a commitment to you; second, someone must have knowingly failed in their commitment, whilst aware that it will thwart your interests (out

of either a lack of care or respect); and third, you must be aware of the commitment and their intentional failure to honour it. One does not feel betrayed by a mere failure of another to demonstrate competence. Rather one feels betrayed by another's insincere commitment where this commitment has been made specifically to you. Yet, as will become clearer in the following section, non-evidential trust does not always involve this specific kind of commitment.

Further, it is commonly assumed that being trusted in the relevant sense is an honour. Yet we are uncertain why being trusted is even *prima facie* an honour, given some other key assumptions in the literature. For example, it is commonly assumed that non-evidential trust is at least sometimes offered by people with self-interested motives and who do not offer their trust on the basis of a careful judgement about who is in fact trustworthy. Being trusted by someone because she regards trusting you as a good way to advance her interests does not seem to be much of an honour.

There is, of course, much to be said about strategies for deflecting each of the difficulties that arise from the inclusion of attitude-liability assumptions in an account of non-evidential trust. However, an advantage of our account of non-evidential trust is that we are able to avoid these difficulties altogether by dropping the attitude-liability assumptions. However, even assuming that our account avoids the difficulties raised by attitude-liability assumptions, we are still left with the epistemic puzzle that is the focus of this paper.

A central thought in the literature about non-evidential trust is that there can be something of value about our evidentially unsupported, or under-supported, reliance on other people. More particularly, the thought is that there is a special kind of interpersonal value that cannot be achieved by, and is in fact thwarted by a *sang froid* evidential assessment. The value at issue is normally described as practical and in terms of advancing a relationship between X and Y. Non-evidential trust captures the sense in which one might claim that trust in one's

business partner is undermined if one proceeds to hire a private investigator to check on whether she is skimming money off of your joint enterprise. The act of trying to confirm trustworthiness is inconsistent with non-evidentially trusting. Accordingly, whilst arguments for the practical value of this kind of trust can be generated straightforwardly, the arguments currently on offer concerning its epistemic significance are more problematic.

The difficulty arises because it is not immediately clear how one can demonstrate the epistemic significance of non-evidential testimonial trust without searching for and relying on evidence, and one cannot appeal to evidence while still genuinely holding an attitude of interpersonal non-evidential trust.¹⁵ As Jennifer Lackey notes, ‘... either the view of testimony in question is genuinely interpersonal but epistemically impotent, or it is not epistemically impotent but neither is it genuinely interpersonal’.¹⁶ Lackey believes that this kind of dilemma is insurmountable. We disagree. We shall argue that non-evidential trust can be a valuable tool which facilitates our epistemic advancement in a way that is not properly characterised as purely pragmatic. In some circumstances, non-evidential testimonial trust generates a distinctive type of epistemic reason for belief.

3. The Attitude of Trust

Let’s consider in more detail some of the standardly given reasons as to why a truster may non-evidentially trust an individual to ϕ , if not due to evidence that she will ϕ . Note that various accounts of trust offer differing reasons, and some of the accounts, such as those of Hawley and Jones, appear to be in tension.¹⁷ We propose that this tension can be eased once we recognise that there are in fact two kinds of non-evidential trust: dialogical and non-dialogical. Dialogical non-evidential trust postulates some kind of prior relationship/interaction be-

tween the truster and trusted person such that the trusted is aware of the truster's dependence. And importantly the acknowledgement of this relationship factors into at least part of the reason why the truster believes that the trusted will behave trustworthily. The acknowledgement of the relationship also belongs to the broader category of reasons why the truster regards the person she trusts as trustworthy. X expects Y to have made a commitment either directly or indirectly to X to ϕ (i.e. Y is aware, X is dependent upon Y to ϕ , etc). And X expects Y to be responsive to her dependence on him. Non-dialogical non-evidential trust, on the other hand, also operates on the basis of expectations that X holds towards Y, but it doesn't require Y to be responsive to X's dependence. Nor does it require that Y is aware of X's dependence on him as featuring in the motivation to trust.¹⁸

We shall describe X's non-evidential trust for Y in terms of X's affective attitude of optimism towards Y's 'good-nature': where 'good-nature' means nothing more here than that Y has the disposition to communicate competently and sincerely, that Y thinks that communicating competently and sincerely is the right thing to do, and X agrees and regards Y's action as commendable.¹⁹

Within the literature one often finds objections to this kind of approach in the form of warnings against 'moralising tendencies' within cases of non-evidential trust more generally. The proponents of these objections highlight that we can have non-evidential trust in 'bad' people to do 'bad' things.²⁰ While true, this is worry is beside the point. One need not expect those whom one affectively trusts to have general or even predominantly good character traits; one only need expect that they have *a sufficient degree* of the specific positive quality to meet one's present expectations in this context, as is perhaps illustrated by the idea of honour among thieves.

We want to be careful to distinguish our account thus far from Jones's, which is similar in some respects but importantly different in others. She argues that affective trust involves a sense of optimism towards another's 'goodwill' – which she analyses in terms of benevolence, compassion, integrity and the like. However, she combines optimism about goodwill with a second component, namely an expectation that the person trusted is not motivated by something 'less honourable' such as selfishness, fear or stupidity.²¹

Jones's second condition, although intuitively appealing, is too demanding. There are times when motivation from self-interest is compatible with motives arising from a more commendable character disposition. This can be helpfully illustrated with an example. Suppose that you have a sexist employer who has made a commitment to himself to treat women equally because he knows that he will suffer from a social backlash if he does not. You might have little care or respect for the employer; you may even actively dislike him. But suppose that you believe that honouring the commitments that one makes to oneself is a valuable quality in a person, and suppose you attribute this quality to him. We think it possible that you could non-evidentially trust him to keep his commitments to treating female employees equally.²²

4. Reasons for Trusting, Reasons from Trust

As the discussion of evidential and non-evidential trust makes clear, there is a puzzle about how trust could give us epistemic reasons for belief or play any positive normative epistemic role. Here is the puzzle. Non-evidential trust seems to be epistemically irrelevant, as it is by definition not underpinned by evidence or other considerations capable of providing traditionally conceived epistemic reasons. If philosophers like Keller and Stroud²³ are right, non-evi-

dentially trusting someone may give us pragmatic reasons to believe her testimony, because doing so may be a constitutive norm of trusting someone.²⁴ Even if they are right and having an attitude of affective trust towards another person does generate pragmatic reasons for believing her testimony, these pragmatic reasons, or the facts that constitute them, do not bear on the probability that the testimony of the trusted individual is true.

If the charge against non-evidential trust is that it is epistemically irrelevant, then the charge against evidential trust is that it is epistemically redundant. Recall that one holds an attitude of evidential trust towards an individual when, roughly, one takes it that there is evidence that that person's testimony in the relevant domain is reliable. This puts someone who evidentially trusts another individual in one of two epistemic situations: either the truster assigns the correct degree of evidential weight in accordance with the actual evidence to the trusted person's testimony, or the truster assigns the wrong degree of evidential weight given the actual evidence to the trusted person's testimony. In the latter case it is difficult to see how assigning the wrong degree of evidential weight to the trusted person's testimony can in any way ground or provide additional positive epistemic reasons for belief to the proposition that was the object of the testimony. In the case where one assigns the correct degree of evidential weight to testimony, a separate problem arises, namely that of redundancy. We shall take up this problem later in this section.

Our focus in the remainder of the chapter is to propose a novel, but qualified way in which non-evidential testimonial trust may provide epistemic reasons for belief over and above any evidential reasons that one may have for believing the contents of the testimony. Before taking on the main task, we shall briefly look at what kind of reasons there are for having an attitude of non-evidential and evidential trust, respectively.

Whatever sorts of normative reasons for belief we may or may not gain from having an attitude of (testimonial) trust towards another individual, there are normative reasons for having trust attitudes. As is generally the case for mental states and dispositions, there can be incentive-driven reasons.²⁵ A mind-reading eccentric billionaire can offer you all of her gold if you have an attitude of non-evidential trust towards another individual and likewise for the attitude of evidential trust. More mundanely, life is often easier and more pleasant in a number of respects if you trust what your friends, teachers, and family says about many things much of the time. The reasons for this can come from that fact that one will experience smoother social interactions and can include diverse benefits such as distributing one's cognitive burdens to others (whether or not that turns out to be conducive to forming true or justified beliefs). In addition, non-evidential trust in particular may be accompanied by positive feelings towards the trusted individual, which may be valuable either intrinsically or instrumentally.

While there can be pragmatic reasons for having an attitude of non-evidential trust towards an individual, our understanding of non-evidential trust precludes there being anything more than weak evidential reasons for adopting an attitude of non-evidential trust. Although we shall argue in §6 that non-evidential trust can provide a special kind of epistemic reason for belief, it is difficult to see how non-evidential trust is suited to provide evidential reasons for belief, as the reasons that count in favour of holding the attitude of non-evidential trust towards an individual must not be strong evidential reasons that the person being trusted is in fact reliable or an expert in the relevant domain.

On the other hand, one can have epistemic – and in particular evidential – reasons for standing in an attitude of evidential trust towards another individual. It may be helpful to consider an example, *the coffee taster*:

In coffee brewing, extraction yield is measured as a percentage and is calculated by taking the product of the weight of brewed coffee in grams multiplied by the total dissolved solids and dividing it by the weight of ground coffee used (the 'dose'). Total dissolved solids are measured with a device called a 'refractometer'. Provided a refractometer is available and the relevant weights are known, it is possible to determine the extraction yield of a cup of coffee with great precision.

Suppose someone claiming to be a highly skilled coffee taster says that she can reliably determine the extraction yield of a cup of coffee. Simply asserting that one is highly skilled at x is not evidence for being highly skilled at x .²⁶ The assertion itself is not an epistemic reason to trust what the coffee taster says about the extraction yield of any particular cup of coffee.

But let us suppose now that we conduct a study to see whether the coffee taster is in fact a reliable and accurate judge of extraction yields. Armed with a refractometer and scale, we check her claims against our own careful measurements and discover that she is, in fact, a highly reliable and accurate judge of the extraction yield of any cup of coffee. Given this information, it appears that we have a reason to adopt an attitude of evidential trust towards the coffee taster, at least with respect to extraction yields, because we have excellent evidence that her judgements are accurate.

Of course, this is a rather minimalistic form of trust, rather like the kind of trust that we have in a piece of laboratory equipment because we have checked its calibration ourselves. Our reason for having this kind of trust extends only to judging the extraction yield of a cup of coffee. Were the same coffee taster to make another assertion about a cup of coffee's properties, for example its pH level, we would need some new evidence that she was competent to make pH level judgements. That evidence could come in more than one form: for example either direct evidence that she is a reliable and accurate judge of pH levels or indirect evidence that those who accurately judge of extraction yield are also reliable and accurate

judges of pH levels. It is not difficult to extend the laboratory equipment analogy to a device with some form of multisensor.

This example points to an interesting feature of evidential trust. The normative reasons for adopting an attitude of evidential trust towards someone in a particular domain are often themselves evidence for the contents of their testimony. The reasons one has for evidentially trusting the coffee taster are also reasons for believing the contents of her testimony, independently of their being the contents of her testimony. It is worth explaining this observation in more detail.

Let us return to the *coffee taster* example. In that example, there was a strong evidential reason to believe that the coffee taster was a reliable and accurate judge of extraction yield. Suppose that she says of a particular cup of coffee that the extraction yield is 21%. Is there an evidential reason to believe her testimony? That depends to some extent on what kind of principles one accepts with respect to the testimony of reliable individuals (or instruments).

It is not particularly controversial that the testimony of an expert about something within her domain of expertise counts as evidence. Let us suppose in that in the *coffee taster* example the evidential reasons for believing that the taster is reliable are the very facts that constitute her reliability (e.g. her demonstrated ability to correctly estimate the extraction yield of a cup of coffee). Suppose that the coffee taster testifies that a particular cup of coffee has a 21% extraction yield. We now have an evidential reason to believe that the cup coffee has a 21% extraction yield.

Our reason is made up of two parts. One comprises the facts that constitute the testifier's reliability. The other comprises the contents of the testimony. Put in a slightly more regimented form, we could say that the fact that individual *I* testifies to *T* and that individual *I* is reliable with respect to the domain under which *T* falls is a reason to believe *T*.

Notice that in this case our reason to believe that the extraction yield is 21% partially comprises the same facts that are reasons to believe that the coffee taster is reliable. Reasons for believing that someone is reliable, or at least the facts that are or provide those reasons, are also part of the reason for believing the contents of a reliable individual's testimony. The reason to believe that the individual is reliable does not add a further reason to believe the reliable person's testimony. That would be double counting.

Consider a similar case. Suppose that we have a strong reason to believe (perhaps we in fact ought to believe) that the coffee taster is a reliable and accurate judge of extraction yield. However, in this version of the example, she is not in fact reliable.²⁷ Against the odds, she guessed arbitrarily but accurately over a large number of trials. According to the principle that testimony in the relevant domain from reliable judges is evidence for the contents of their testimony, there is no reason to believe that a cup of coffee has a 21% extraction yield on the basis of the coffee taster's saying that there is.

One could try to adopt a weaker principle, one that says that there is reason to believe x if an individual whom we have reason to believe is reliable with respect to x testifies that x . We are circumspect about this principle for reasons discussed in the literature,²⁸ but we can set these concerns aside for the moment. We may note simply in this case that the reasons for believing what the coffee taster testified to, based on her testimony, are no stronger than our reasons for judging her as a reliable and accurate judge. Even if we treat believing that someone is reliable as a form of evidential trust, the trust itself adds no extra evidential reason for believing the content of the trusted individual's testimony.

Two points are of particular interest to us here. The first is that evidence for the reliability of an individual's testimony in a domain is evidence, directly or indirectly, for the contents of their testimony in that domain. This suggests that one lacks reasons to evidentially

trust someone when one at least initially lacks testimony-independent evidential reasons to believe the contents of that person's testimony in the relevant domain.

The second point brings us back to the problem of redundancy mentioned in §4. Once one has sufficient evidential reason to believe that an individual's testimony in a particular domain is reliable, that person's testimony, in the usual way that expert testimony does, provides evidential reasons for belief. This raises a dilemma for a proponent of the view that evidential trust itself provides reasons for belief. Either the attitude of evidential trust just is the disposition to accept testimony from actual experts, or it is a separate special attitude. If it is the former, evidential trust is not in any interesting sense trust; it is just a disposition to accept testimony that is evidence as evidence. If it is the latter, however, the attitude provides no additional reason to believe the expert testimony over and above that given by the evidence that the individual in question is an expert – by which we mean in this case 'gives reliable testimony'. Thus as far as we can see an attitude of evidential trust cannot provide additional epistemic reasons for believing the testimony of someone who is evidentially trusted.

Setting aside evidential trust, it is interesting, and we believe telling, that many of the central cases in which non-evidential (testimonial) trust is present are in a broad sense *pedagogic*. We take pedagogic situations to have a least four interesting features:

1. There is a presumed asymmetry in either domain specific or general competence.
2. The person who is trusted expects to be believed and the person who trusts expects the person whom they trust to testify accurately, either in the relevant domain or in general.
3. Beliefs are transmitted by testimony from the trusted person to the person who trusts on the mutual understanding that the (presumed) asymmetry in competence between them will thereby be reduced and possibly be eliminated over time.²⁹
4. The person who trusts (usually) does not have evidential reasons to believe that the trusted person is an expert.

This describes familiar formal educational situations. Consider an adult literacy course. One is taught to read and write. It is presumed that the teacher knows more about reading and writing than the student. It is a presupposition of the teacher/student relation that the teacher expects to be believed and that the student expects the teacher to tell her the truth about how to read and write. Such education is undertaken with the aim of reducing the epistemic gap between the teacher and student; ideally the student will read at a higher level after studying with the teacher. And one may note that someone who is completely unable to read is not in a position to judge on the basis of evidence that a particular teacher is herself able to read well, since the student is not in a position to compare what the teacher claims a particular passage says to what it actually says.

In §5 we shall explore the possibility that non-evidential trust at least sometimes provides reasons to believe in pedagogic situations.

5. Trust as a source of epistemic, but non-evidential, reasons for belief

Despite the apparent difficulties with doing so discussed thus far, we propose, albeit cautiously, that there are distinctive epistemic reasons for belief that arise from non-evidential trust, even in cases in which there is little evidence that the trusted individual is reliable in the domain in which she is testifying. Our idea is this. As a contingent matter, testimony facilitates learning. This is the case even under circumstances in which the testimony is false and the testifier(s) unreliable. Our claim is that there is a (qualified) standing epistemic reason to believe those whom we non-evidentially trust with respect to a particular domain up until the point where we have appropriate access to evidential reasons for belief in that domain. In

short, trust provides reasons for belief until evidence becomes available in a particular sense of ‘available’.

Let us return to the example of someone taking an adult literacy course. For the sake of the example, let us also assume that that individual cannot read at all and does not know the alphabet. The world that this individual inhabits is full of people reacting to what she recognises as written speech. She notices that those who claim to be able to read are able to navigate certain tasks that she cannot. For example, they can follow written directions to arrive at their desired destinations. When they (appear to) have read a novel, they discuss a story having the same features and with the same dialogue as the one she encountered in an audio book with the same title, and so on. In short, she can see that there is a community of literate people who successfully interact with their environment and each other, apparently at least partially through the medium of written language.

These observations, we may assume, constitute some general evidence that individuals in the self-described ‘literate’ community are to some degree competent readers and writers. But which ones really know how to read and write well, are competent to expound on punctuation or who have reliable, large vocabularies is not something that she can yet judge.

At the first adult literacy class, the person in this example decides to trust her teacher to testify correctly about how to read and write. Her teacher claims to be a member of the community of literate people and seems to be accepted as such. By trusting her teacher, who is in fact competent with basic reading and writing, she is able to learn the alphabet and to start to read. Yet as her reading ability improves and she can read grammar books on her own, she comes to realise that her teacher is ignorant of grammar, has false beliefs about punctuation conventions, and has a limited and often inaccurately used vocabulary. In short, as she

becomes more competent, she no longer needs to trust her teacher because she now can access the evidence in her environment.

Trusting her teacher was not a necessary condition for the student to learn to read; she could have trusted another teacher or perhaps cleverly figured things out for herself. Nor was it a sufficient condition for her to learn to read. But it was an effective means for her to learn to read. And it seems intuitively plausible to us that the student in this example had a good epistemic reason to believe the testimony of her teacher, at least in the early stages, because she non-evidentially trusted her teacher. But, once she had access to evidence about reading and her teacher's competence, non-evidential trust ceased to provide a reason for her to believe her teacher's testimony.

This epistemic reason is what we call a *reason of epistemic facilitation*. It occurs in qualified cases of non-evidential trust, namely in pedagogic contexts in which one (a) lacks access to the kind of evidential reasons that would make the testimony redundant, (b) lacks access to the kind of evidential reasons required to make it the case that one ought to believe a testifier is an expert and (c) has evidence that the trusted individual is regarded by the relevant community of individuals as being an expert.

Reasons of epistemic facilitation outstrip the accessible evidence for an individual who has them. They are in a sense fragile reasons. As one gains epistemic competence in a domain, one loses some of one's reasons of epistemic facilitation. As a secondary school student, if one trusts one's chemistry teacher, one has reason to believe what she says about chemistry. On reaching the same level of training as the teacher, one loses one's reasons of epistemic facilitation for believing her and also loses one's reason to non-evidentially trust her testimony about chemistry. But one may still have reasons of epistemic facilitation to believe

the instructors in one's doctoral level chemistry courses even before one has access to the relevant evidential reasons. And so on.

This is, of course, just a sketch of a view, and many important questions have been left unanswered. But we believe that it is worth taking the idea seriously that non-evidential trust provides epistemic, but non-evidential reasons for belief in a limited but important range of circumstances.

6. Conclusion

In this chapter we have sought to clarify the nature of trust and its contribution to determining what we have most epistemic reason to believe. We have offered reconceptualisation of the nature of trust by diagnosing and exposing various problematic assumptions employed by popular current views and then offering a positive alternative account. We have also offered a sketch of an account of a novel kind of reason that may be generated in what we call 'pedagogic' situations, one which arises directly from having an attitude of non-evidential trust towards an individual.

Our aim in writing this chapter has been to provide a more promising approach to understanding what non-evidential trust in fact is and how it could play a positive epistemic role. Both the positive account of non-evidential trust and the details of the role it plays in generating epistemic reasons for belief require more fleshing out. We trust, however, that this chapter is at least an interesting start in developing an improved account of testimonial trust and its epistemic role.

Works Cited

- Baier, A. (1986) Trust and Antitrust, *Ethics*, 96: 231-60
- Bailey, O. (2018) Empathy and Testimonial Trust, *Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplement* 84: 139-160
- Faulkner, P. (2007) On Telling and Trusting, *Mind*, 116: 875-902
- Finlay, M. (2018) Testimonial Insult: A moral reason for belief, *Logos & Episteme* IX: 27-48
- Fitelson, B. (2012) Evidence of Evidence is not (Necessarily) Evidence, *Analysis* 72: 85-88
- Glüer, K. & Wikforss, Å. (2013) Against Belief Normativity, In Timothy Chan (ed.), *The Aim of Belief*. Oxford University Press.
- Glüer, K. & Wikforss, Å. (2018). Reasons for Belief and Normativity. In Daniel Star (ed.), *Oxford Handbook of Reasons and Normativity*. Oxford University Press. pp. 575-599.
- Hardin, R (1996) Trustworthiness, *Ethics*, 107: 26–42
- Hawley, K. (2014) Trust, Distrust and Commitment, *Nous*, 48: 1-20
- Hawley, K (2017) Trustworthy groups and organisations, in P. Faulkner & T. Simpson (eds.), *The Philosophy of Trust*. Oxford, Oxford University Press
- Hazlett, A. (2017) On the Special Insult of Refusing Testimony, *Philosophical Explorations* 20: 37-51.
- Hieronimi, P. (2006) The Reasons of Trust, *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, 86: 213-236
- Holton, R. (1994) Deciding to Trust, Coming to Believe, *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, 72: 63-76
- Howard, C. (forthcoming) The Fundamentality of Fit, In Russ Shafer-Landau (ed.), *Oxford Studies in Metaethics*, vol. 14. New York, NY, USA
- Jones, K. (1996) Trust as an Affective Attitude, *Ethics* 107: 4-25
- Jones, K. (2012) Trustworthiness *Ethics* 123: 61-85
- Lackey, J. (2008) *Learning from Words: Testimony as a Source of Knowledge*, Oxford, OUP
- McCormick, M. S. (2014) *Believing Against the Evidence: Agency and the Ethics of Belief*. Routledge.

- McLeod, C. (2015) Trust, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2015/entries/trust/>>
- Moran, R. (2005). Getting told and being believed, *Philosophers' Imprint*, 5: 1-29.
- Mullin, A. (2005) Trust, Social Norms, and Motherhood, *Journal of Social Philosophy*, 36: 316–330.
- Nickel, P.J. (2007) Trust and Obligation-Ascription, *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice*, 10: 309-319
- O’Neil, C. (2012) Lying, Trust, and Gratitude, *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, 40: 301–333
- Pettit, P. (1995) The Cunning of Trust, *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, 24: 202–225
- Reisner, A. (2016) Peer Disagreement, Rational Requirements, and Evidence of Evidence as Evidence Against, In Pedro Schmechtig & Martin Grajner (eds.), *Epistemic Reasons, Norms and Goals*. De Gruyter. pp. 95-114.
- Reisner, A. (2018) Pragmatic Reasons for Belief, In Daniel Star (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Reasons and Normativity*. Oxford University Press.
- Simon Keller (2004) Friendship and Belief, *Philosophical Papers*, 33: 329-351
- Stroud, S. (2006) Epistemic Partiality in Friendship, *Ethics*, 116: 498-524
- Wanderer, J. & Townsend, L. (2013) Is it Rational to Trust?, *Philosophy Compass*, 8: 1–14

¹ The authors would like to thank audiences at the Uppsala Higher Seminar in Aesthetics and at a workshop associated with this volume at St Thomas University for valuable comments on drafts of this paper. We especially thank Miriam McCormick, Sharon Ryan, and Sophie Stammers for their in-depth feedback and the editors of this volume, Scott Stapleford and Kevin McCain for their feedback and support. In addition we would like to thank Jon Robson for his insight and comments on material that constitutes the background for this paper. Andrew Reisner wishes to express his gratitude to Vetenskapsrådet, whose generous support for the project *Pragmatism, Pluralism, and Reasons for Belief* has provided time and resources for writing this chapter.

² We do not mean ‘most epistemic reason to believe’ to be equivalent to ought, at least not as a conceptual matter. What one ought to believe all-in may be partially or completely determined by non-epistemological reasons. For more on this question, see Reisner (2018).

³ Or perhaps even knowingly against the evidence.

⁴ Of what kind is not clear in the literature.

⁵ These are our terms. Similar distinctions are often made in the literature labelled as a distinction between ‘normative/predictive trust’, ‘affective/predictive trust’, and ‘trust/mere reliance’.

⁶ See Hieronymi (2006), Keller (2004), and Stroud (2006).

⁷ It is a perhaps controversial assumption of the discussion in this chapter that sincere and competent testimony constitutes evidence under favourable conditions.

⁸ Within the literature on trust, the notions of dependence and interest are often captured in terms of vulnerability. Katherine Hawley (2014) has challenged the necessity of vulnerability in relation to what we call evidential trust. She gives an example of how one might trust a friend to bring enough food for the picnic but one might still bring some food anyway. This is not ‘trust’ in the sense that we are using the term but mere expectation.

⁹ We understand events as timed states of affairs. In some cases, it may be better to understand this *relatum* in the trust relation as an event type as opposed to events.

¹⁰ The general assumption is that evidential trust can be applied to inanimate objects whereas non-evidential trust cannot. However, we note that this assumption plays no role in our arguments.

¹¹ Phillip Nickel (2007) has raised a similar worry. He objects to the prevalent and integral use of betrayal within the trust literature. However, his examples and arguments fail to capture correctly both the concept of trust and what is problematic about betrayal for it. He fails to acknowledge the above puzzles, and his concept of trust fails to recognise the necessity of interest, expectation and dependence (as is apparent in his examples). He does nevertheless valuably acknowledge that accounting for trust in terms of attitudes that occur in response to it rather than attitudes involved in it is not an optimal methodology.

¹² See for example: Baier (1986), Hawley (2014), Holton (1994), Jones (1996 and 2012), McLeod (2015) Mullin, (2005), O’Neil (2012), Pettit, P. (1995), Wanderer, & Townsend (2013).

¹³ See Holton, (1994) pg. 4. He claims that ‘...you have a readiness to feel betrayal should [trust] be disappointed, and gratitude should it be upheld’.

¹⁴ Hawley (2017), Holton (1994), and Jones (1996) and (2012).

¹⁵ While many authors eschew the claim that non-evidential trust has epistemic significance, there are some influential ones who do not such as Richard Moran (2005) and Paul Faulkner (2007).

¹⁶ Lackey (2008) pg. 222.

¹⁷ Hawley, (2014), Jones, (1996)

¹⁸ Note that: non-dialogical non-evidential trust might equally serve to develop an interpersonal relationship. The difference is that X need not expect Y to be aware of or responsive to X's specific dependence.

¹⁹ For dialogical non-evidential trust, we can add the condition that Y believes that communicating competently and sincerely is the right thing to do, directly or indirectly, at least in part because she is aware that X is dependent on her doing so. With respect to dialogical testimonial trust we think our account is broadly compatible with the account proposed by Katherine Hawley (2014). She holds that to trust someone is to simply expect that they have the will to fulfil whatever commitments they have made. Note that Hawley leaves it open as to whether the claim is that we expect them to have the will to fulfil whatever commitments they have made because they have independent, good reasons to fulfil these commitments or because they are aware of the commitments that they have made and have integrity and a sense of duty to fulfil them. We shall leave the issue as to whether Hawley's account's has broader applicability for non-dialogical trust open. Note that in some cases, it is not always clear what the commitment is, or who it has been made to. There is also a danger that the commitment is so indirect that the concept becomes empty, but we shall not pursue that here.

²⁰ See Nickel (2007).

²¹ Hardin (1996) comes closest to endorsing this approach. Speaking of 'trust' broadly, Hardin argues that A's trust for B simply involves A's expectation that B has purely self-interested motivations. The thought is that when we trust someone we simply expect the trusted person with whom we are interacting to want to preserve a relationship with us. On a Hardin-style account, we believe that they believe that it is in their best interests to keep us happy. This approach need not be normatively valenced and it is often understood in the context of evidential trust involving risk-assessment. Yet one could develop this account such that it were normatively valenced.

²² There are other aspects of Jones's (1996) account which are crucially different to ours, such as her later appeal to evidence and the claim that this kind of trust cannot be voluntary.

²³ See Keller (2004) and Stroud (2006). Note that neither Keller nor Stroud discuss testimony directly, but one can easily imagine using a similar style of argument to support believing the testimony of trusted individuals or individuals to whom one stands in a trust-entailing relationship like friendship or romantic partnership.

²⁴ Following Glüer and Wikforss (2013 & 2018), McCormick (2015) and Reisner (2018), we are sceptical that there are constitutivist reasons of this kind, but here we are only concerned to point out that Keller and Stroud style arguments do not provide trust-based epistemic reasons for belief, whether or not they provide trust-based pragmatic reasons for belief.

²⁵ See Howard (forthcoming) and Reisner (2009) for more discussion of incentive-based reasons.

²⁶ It is empirically possible that there is a significant positive correlation between claiming that one is highly skilled at *x* and being highly skilled at *x*. Perhaps it is better to say that we are assuming that there is no interesting positive or negative correlation between saying one is highly skilled at *x* and being highly skilled at *x*.

²⁷ We are assuming that there can be strong misleading evidence.

²⁸ See Fitelson (2012) and Reisner (2016) for examples of why evidence of evidence of *x* is not necessarily evidence for *x*.

²⁹ We take it that this is one of the obvious purposes of teaching. We do not assume, however, that parties in pedagogic situations expect to achieve anything approaching epistemic equality in the relevant domain or generally, merely that the epistemic gap between them will become smaller.