

# Testimonial Disjunctivism

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**\*draft of January 2018. Please do not cite without permission\***

1. As a theory of knowledge, epistemological disjunctivism is at once both highly attractive and highly implausible. Moreover, it is highly attractive and highly implausible for exactly the same reasons. Epistemological disjunctivism purports to explain how the epistemic grounds that support knowledge, in certain paradigm cases, are both reflectively accessible *and* factive. That is to say, they consist exclusively in things that the subject is aware of and are incompatible with the falsity of the subject's belief. This is attractive because it purports to reconcile the most plausible elements of both traditional *internalist* and *externalist* theories of knowledge. It is also implausible because the traditional dichotomy between internalist and externalist theories of knowledge exists precisely because epistemic grounds are widely thought to not be both reflectively accessible and factive.

In discussing epistemological disjunctivism, Duncan Pritchard makes the following suggestive comment:

It may well be possible to offer a variant of epistemological disjunctivism which is applicable to knowledge in general [Pritchard 2012, p. 13].

The task in this discussion is to evaluate the plausibility of an epistemological disjunctivist theory of knowledge from testimony. The discussion will be organised around three questions. The first is *what are the elements of an epistemological disjunctivist theory of testimony?* Discussions of epistemological disjunctivism have typically concentrated on perceptual knowledge. An evaluation of the viability of an epistemological disjunctivist theory of testimony needs to have the contours of an epistemological disjunctivist theory of testimony firmly in view. With this in mind, the first part of the discussion will focus on identifying the elements of an epistemological disjunctivist theory of testimony.

The second question will be *where does an epistemological disjunctivist theory of testimony fit into the existing landscape of theories of testimony?* The epistemology of testimony has a distinctive topography. Rather than being divided into internalist and externalist categories, theories are classified as either *reductionist* or *anti-reductionist*. The traditional view takes it that an epistemological disjunctivist theory of testimony has been conceived of in anti-reductionist terms. I shall argue, however, that conceiving of an epistemological disjunctivist theory of testimony in anti-reductionist terms obscures important features of the theory.

The third question will be *is an epistemological disjunctivist theory of testimony viable?* In much the same way that it has traditionally been treated as an anti-reductionist theory of testimony, the epistemological disjunctivist theory has been dismissed on the grounds that are deployed against anti-reductionist theories. I shall argue, however, that the epistemological disjunctivist theory has distinctive resources available to it for resisting the considerations traditionally brought to bear against anti-reductionist theories that other anti-reductionist theories lack. Ultimately, however, I argue that accounting for paradigm cases of knowledge from testimony—which is crucial to the plausibility of a disjunctivist theory of testimony—is problematic and this undermines the viability of an epistemological disjunctivist theory of testimony.

2. An epistemological disjunctivist theory of perceptual knowledge consists of three claims. The first is a claim about the kind of factive reason that underpins perceptual knowledge. The second is a claim about why

this factive reason should be thought to be within the domain of what is reflectively accessible to the perceiving subject. The third is a claim about the kind of cases in which a subject's knowledge is underpinned by epistemic grounds that are factive and reflectively accessible. From the elements of an epistemological disjunctivist theory of perceptual knowledge, we can derive the elements of an epistemological disjunctivist theory of testimony.

The first element of an epistemological disjunctivist theory of perceptual knowledge concerns what the epistemic ground that supports a subject's knowledge in the paradigm case is. In the case of perceptual knowledge, epistemological disjunctivists are apt to claim that, in paradigm cases of knowledge, a subject's knowledge that  $\phi$  is grounded in the fact that she *sees* that  $\phi$ , rather than the fact that it *appears* to her that  $\phi$ . Where the mere fact that it appears to someone that  $\phi$  is compatible with  $\phi$  being false, the fact that she sees that  $\phi$  is not. Hence the ground that supports the subject's knowledge is *factive*.

In the epistemology of testimony, the factive epistemic ground that supports the listener's testimonial knowledge that  $\phi$  is the fact that she *heard from the speaker that*  $\phi$ , rather than merely *hearing the speaker say that*  $\phi$ . As John McDowell puts it:

The epistemic standing one can acquire in conversation is that of having heard from one's interlocutor that things are thus and so. One cannot count as having heard from someone that things are thus and so unless, by virtue of understanding what the person says, one is in a position to know that things are that way. If it turns out that things are not that way, or that although they are, the person from whom one took oneself to have heard it did not know it, one cannot persist in the claim that one heard from him that things are that way, but must retreat to the claim that one heard him say that they are [McDowell 1994, p. 210].

We now have the first of the elements of testimonial disjunctivism in view. According to testimonial disjunctivism, a listener's knowledge that  $\phi$  can be grounded in a factive reason. The reason in question is the fact that the listener heard from the speaker that  $\phi$ . In cases where the listener fails to know that  $\phi$ , her belief is instead grounded merely in the fact that she heard the speaker says that  $\phi$ .

The second element of an epistemological disjunctivist theory of perceptual knowledge is a claim about why the factive reason that grounds a subject's knowledge should be thought to be within the domain of what is reflectively accessible to the subject. Different versions of disjunctivism about perceptual knowledge address this demand in different ways. The common feature between them, however, is the idea that one ought not to conclude that a subject's epistemic grounds are the same in a case in which she *sees* that  $\phi$  and a case in which she *hallucinates* that  $\phi$  on the grounds that a case of seeing that  $\phi$  and a case of hallucinating that  $\phi$  might be indistinguishable from the subject's perspective.

According to Pritchard, the reason why the fact that an experience of seeing that  $\phi$  might be subjectively indistinguishable from an experience of hallucinating that  $\phi$  does not entail that, in the former case, the fact that she is seeing that  $\phi$ , is not reflectively accessible to the subject is because of a distinction between *favouring* and *discriminating* epistemic support. An individual has favouring epistemic support for  $\phi$  just if her evidence *on balance* supports her belief that  $\phi$  rather than  $\psi$ , where  $\psi$  is some error possibility. And this, Pritchard notes, is compatible with her being unable to *distinguish* between  $\phi$  and  $\psi$ . In other words, the fact that one cannot distinguish between seeing a tree and hallucinating a tree does not mean that, in the case where one is seeing a tree, her reflectively accessible evidence does not put her in a position to know this.

McDowell's reason for thinking that the subject is seeing, rather than hallucinating, is part of her reflectively accessible epistemic grounds is different. According to McDowell, a conception of what is reflectively accessible to a subject that allows factive reasons to be reflectively accessible to her is a necessary condition not only of making sense of how a subject can come to know facts about the world, but of making sense of how a subject's thoughts can even be about the world. Denying that factive reasons can be reflectively accessible to a subject leads, in McDowell's words, to a 'disastrous extinguishing of content' where 'everything goes dark in the interior'

[McDowell 2002, p. 889]. One might think that the sceptical consequence is one thing, but the consequence that an individual's thoughts cannot be about the world at all would seem to be a catastrophic consequence for any theory.

Importantly, both the motivation given by Pritchard and the motivation given by McDowell can be described without reference to anything specific to perception. Whilst they are employed in the service of an epistemological disjunctivist theory of perceptual knowledge, insofar as they are correct, they are so in virtue of general principles about knowledge, rather than principles distinctive to perception. As such, one might think that either applies just as well to knowledge from testimony as knowledge from perception.

This means that, insofar as Pritchard is correct that a subject being unable to distinguish between a case of seeing and a case of hallucinating does not entail that, in a case where she is seeing something, what she is reflectively aware of does not include the fact that she is seeing it, the fact that a listener might be unable to distinguish between a case of being told something by a speaker who reports a fact and a case of being told by a speaker who does not does not entail that the fact that the speaker is reporting a fact is not reflectively accessible to the listener in the former case. The listener who cannot distinguish between the two statements might nonetheless have favouring epistemic support for the fact that she is being told a fact just as the subject who cannot distinguish between the two perceptual experiences can have favouring support for the fact that she is seeing, rather than hallucinating.

In the same way, McDowell's motivating for thinking that factive reasons can be reflectively accessible to a subject in a perceptual case can be translated to the case of testimony. Where McDowell maintains that insisting that the subjective indistinguishability between a case of seeing and a case of hallucinating entails that factive reasons cannot be reflectively accessible to a subject engenders a problem of mind-world relations, so too does insisting that the subjective indistinguishability between a case of a speaker making knowledge available and a speaker who does not entails that factive reasons cannot be reflectively accessible to a listener. An epistemological disjunctivist theory of knowledge from testimony thus follows the contours of an epistemological disjunctivist theory of perceptual knowledge in accounting for why the factive reasons that underpin knowledge should be thought to be reflectively accessible to the subject.

Lastly, there is the question of the cases in which the subject's knowledge is grounded by a factive, reflectively accessible reason. The disjunctivist idea is that it is mistake to think that the characterisation of paradigm cases of knowledge, in which everything is epistemically benign, should be constrained by the characterisation of cases in which not everything is epistemically benign. But what are these epistemic paradigm cases? According to Pritchard, in the case of perceptual knowledge, the case must be one that is both *objectively* and *subjectively* good. This means that it must be one in which the cognitive processes involved in the production of the subject's belief are ones that are reliable and they are situated in an environment that is conducive to their doing so. In the case of perception, Pritchard identifies the relevant cognitive processes as those involving the subject's perceptual capacities. The case being subjectively good involves the believing subject not being in possession of reasons that entail that she ought to doubt the belief in question. [Pritchard 2012, pp. 29-30]. The idea is that this type of case is, by anyone's standards, a central case of perceptual knowledge. And in such cases, Pritchard argues, there is no reason to think that the subject's knowledge can be underpinned by a factive, reflectively accessible epistemic ground.

Plausibly, something like this is what McDowell has in mind in describing the paradigm case of knowledge from testimony. The differences between perception and testimony mean that the details of what constitutes an epistemic paradigm case differ from details of what constitutes an epistemic paradigm case of perceptual knowledge. On the subject of knowledge from testimony, McDowell says the following:

The idea of knowledge by testimony is that if a knower gives intelligible expression to his knowledge, he puts it into the public domain, where it can be picked up by those who can understand the expression, as long as the opportunity is not closed to them because it would be doxastically

irresponsible to believe the speaker [McDowell 1994, p. 438].

There are two key features here that help identify the testimonial disjunctivist's paradigm case. The first is that the speaker's testimony must involve her giving expression to her knowledge. At a minimum, this means that the paradigm case is one in which the speaker knows what she says. Alternatively, one might read more into the idea of the speaker *expressing* her knowledge and think that it requires the speaker's knowledge to motivate her testimony. That is to say, it must be the case that the speaker says that  $\phi$  *because she knows that  $\phi$* .<sup>1</sup>

As well as the speaker's testimony being an expression of her knowledge, it must be that the listener is not doxastically irresponsible in believing the speaker. One is doxastically irresponsible in one's belief that  $\phi$ , as McDowell conceives of it, just in case one forms the belief that  $\phi$  while being aware of reasons good reasons against  $\phi$ .<sup>2</sup> The kind of case in which testimonial disjunctivism claims that a listener's knowledge is grounded in a factive reason that is reflectively accessible to her is one in which a knowledgeable speaker says something and the listener believes it without being aware of any good reasons against it. With this, we have in view the elements of testimonial disjunctivism. It consists in a claim about what kind of factive reason is available to a listener, which is the fact that the listener *heard from the speaker* that  $\phi$ , a claim about why this should be thought to be reflectively accessible to the listener, which can be either McDowell's observations about the scope of what is internal to the listener, or Pritchard's distinction between favouring and distinguishing epistemic support, and a claim about the conditions under which the listener's knowledge is grounded in this way, which McDowell identifies as a case in which the speaker is knowledgeable and the listener is unaware of reasons against  $\phi$ .

3. With the elements of testimonial disjunctivism in view, it is worth considering where the view fits in the contemporary landscape of theories in the epistemology of testimony. Correctly identifying the place disjunctivism occupies in this terrain is, I believe, crucial to evaluating its plausibility.

Traditionally, theories of testimony have been divided into reductionist and anti-reductionist categories. Exactly which claims are constitutive of each category is a matter of significant disagreement, but it is generally accepted that endorsing both of the following claims is sufficient for a theory to be reductionist:

- (R1) A listener's knowledge that  $\phi$  is grounded in the reasons for  $\phi$  that are reflectively accessible to her.
- (R2) A listener can come to know that  $\phi$  by believing a speaker's testimony that  $\phi$  only if she has reflectively accessible reasons for  $\phi$ .

This is not to say that all reductionist theories endorse both of these claims. But it is to say that any theory that does endorse both is thereby reductionist.<sup>3</sup> That much should be uncontroversial. Equally, the following conjunction gives an anti-reductionist theory:

- (A1) A listener's knowledge that  $\phi$  is grounded in the fact that the speaker knows that  $\phi$ .
- (A2) A listener can come to know that  $\phi$  by believing a speaker's testimony that  $\phi$  even if the listener does not have reflectively accessible reasons for  $\phi$ .

Denying both of the reductionist claims gives rise to an anti-reductionist theory.<sup>4</sup> It might seem that there is a *prima facie* case for thinking that testimonial disjunctivism sits well in the reductionist camp. After all, one

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<sup>1</sup> See {author removed}.

<sup>2</sup> This interpretation of McDowell's notion of doxastic irresponsibility is given by Hannah Ginsborg [2006].

<sup>3</sup> Reductionist theories include those endorsed by Jonathan Adler [1994], David James Barnett [2015], Elizabeth Fricker [2006], Richard Fumerton [2006] and Anna-Sara Malmgren [2006].

<sup>4</sup> Anti-reductionist theories include those given by Tyler Burge [1993, 1997] C.A.J. Coady [1992], Sanford Goldberg [2010], Alvin Goldman [1999], Ernest Sosa [2010].

might think, it endorses both the reductionist (R1) and (R2) claims. Whilst it claims that a listener's knowledge is grounded in the factive reason that she is in a position of hearing from the speaker that  $\phi$ , as opposed to merely hearing the speaker say that  $\phi$ , it claims that this is reflectively accessible to a listener in a paradigm case of knowledge from testimony. Hence, the listener's knowledge is grounded in what is reflectively accessible to her.

Equally, it might seem that testimonial disjunctivism amounts to an endorsement of (R2). The reason that testimonial disjunctivism takes it that a listener's knowledge is grounded in the fact that she is in a position of hearing from a speaker that  $\phi$ , rather than merely hearing the speaker say that  $\phi$  is because this fact is reflectively accessible to the listener. There is thus no reason to think that, outside of the paradigm case, testimonial disjunctivism brings with it a commitment to thinking that a listener's epistemic grounds can extend beyond those reasons that are reflectively accessible to her. Indeed, according to both McDowell and Pritchard, part of the motivation for disjunctivism is that one is *not* forced to accept that someone's epistemic grounds can include reasons that are not reflectively accessible to her.

In light of this, one might think that there is a *prime facie* case for aligning testimonial disjunctivism with the reductionist tradition. Both Lackey and Faulkner, however, reject this and argue that testimonial disjunctivism is best understood as an anti-reductionist theory. Instead of thinking of testimonial disjunctivism in terms of (R1) and (R2), they argue that testimonial disjunctivism can be thought of in terms of (A1) and (A2).

The case for thinking of testimonial disjunctivism as an anti-reductionist theory begins with the observation that the kind of paradigm case that testimonial disjunctivism focuses on. The relevant type of case is one in which the speaker is knowledgeable. The factive reason being made available to the listener thus depends on the speaker knowing what she says. In this way, one might think that, like those who have traditionally endorsed *transmission* theories in the epistemology of testimony, the listener's knowledge is grounded in the speaker's knowledge. As Lackey points out, a listener acquiring knowledge in the way described by testimonial disjunctivism thus depends on the speaker knowing [Lackey 2008, p. 39]. In light of this, Lackey interprets McDowell's disjunctivism in terms of (A1).

Lackey's discussion of testimonial disjunctivism is somewhat implicit, citing McDowell's theory as one of a set of advocates for the principle that a listener can know what a speaker says only if the speaker's testimony is knowledgeable. By contrast, Faulkner's discussion of testimonial disjunctivism is much more explicit. Faulkner characterises McDowell's disjunctivist theory of testimony in terms of a listener coming to be in the same *state of informedness* as the speaker when the speaker tells her something. The speaker's testimony supplies the listener with a reflectively accessible reason. The reason that the speaker's testimony provides the listener with has the same force as the speaker's own reason for believing what she says—the listener comes to be in the state of having heard from the speaker that  $\phi$  only if the speaker is in possession of a correspondingly factive reason, such as having seen that  $\phi$ . In this way, the disjunctivist theory holds that a listener can hear from a speaker that  $\phi$  only if the speaker's testimony that  $\phi$  is an expression of knowledge.

Faulkner describes this as the *same state explanation* of transmission and concludes that testimonial disjunctivism takes it that a listener's knowledge can be grounded in a speaker's knowledge, as transmission theorists typically do. Whilst there are differences between the kind of transmission theories given by transmission theorists such as Tyler Burge [1993, 1997], Michael Dummett [1994], Edward Hinchman [2005], David Owens [2000], or Michael Welbourne [1986], these are differences over *how* transmission takes place, rather than differences over *whether* transmission takes place. Like other transmission theories, testimonial disjunctivism takes it that a listener's knowledge depends on the speaker knowing what she says. Hence, Faulkner concludes that testimonial disjunctivism should be understood as an endorsement of (A1).

Even if they are sound, however, it is a mistake to conclude on the basis of these arguments that testimonial disjunctivism should be understood in terms of (A1) *rather than* (R1). The points of similarity between testimonial disjunctivism and (A1) might serve to show that testimonial disjunctivism is not a straightforward reduc-

tionist theory, like any other. But this does not entail that it is a straightforward anti-reductionist theory that is, in any interesting sense, diametrically opposed to the traditional reductionist theory. Lackey and Faulkner might show that testimonial disjunctivism is compatible with (A1), but testimonial disjunctivism's distinctive commitments mean that it is equally compatible with (R1).

The point of epistemological disjunctivism in general is that the scope of what is reflectively accessible to someone extends further than has traditionally been thought. The result is that, whilst the question of whether knowledge from testimony is grounded in the fact that the speaker knows what she says, or what is reflectively accessible to a listener might divide traditional versions of reductionism and anti-reductionism, or even theories that reject the epistemological disjunctivist's claim about the scope of what is reflectively accessible to someone, it does not identify testimonial disjunctivism as an instance of one rather than the other.

Importantly, the similarities between testimonial disjunctivism and the traditional reductionist theory, outlined in the *prima facie* argument above, are not undermined by the observations Lackey and Faulkner make. We therefore cannot conclude on the basis of these observations that testimonial disjunctivism takes it that the listener's knowledge is grounded in the fact that the speaker knows what she says, in some sense, that testimonial disjunctivism has any more in common with traditional anti-reductionism than with traditional reductionism.

This means that the issue of whether testimonial disjunctivism is a reductionist or an anti-reductionist theory is thus determined by the question of whether it should be understood in terms of (R2) or (A2). Again, the *prima facie* case for thinking of testimonial disjunctivism in terms of (R2) notwithstanding, both Lackey and Faulkner take testimonial disjunctivism to endorse (A2). Both cases turn on the observation that, like traditional anti-reductionist theories, testimonial disjunctivism denies that the kind of testimony-independent reasons that traditional reductionist theories identify are necessary for a listener's belief in a speaker's testimony to amount to knowledge.<sup>5</sup>

Lackey notes that both testimonial disjunctivism and traditional anti-reductionism claim that a knowledgeable speaker can put her audience in a listener in a position to know what the speaker says as long as the audience is not in a position of being aware of reasons against believing the speaker [Lackey 2008, p. 40].<sup>6</sup> Recall that McDowell's disjunctivism required only that the listener avoided doxastic irresponsibility, in terms of forming a belief whilst being aware of reasons against it. Rather than thinking that the listener must have positive reasons *for* believing what the speaker says, McDowell's testimonial disjunctivism merely requires that the listener not be aware of reasons *against* her belief.

This bears more than a passing resemblance to the anti-reductionist claim that Burge expresses in terms of the *Acceptance Principle*, as follows:

A person is entitled to accept as true something that is presented as true and that is intelligible to him, unless there are stronger reasons not to do so [Burge 1993, p. 467].

In light of this similarity, Lackey identifies testimonial disjunctivism as an endorsement of (A2), rather than (R2). Faulkner takes things further. In outlining testimonial disjunctivism, McDowell not only construes doxastic irresponsibility in terms of the listener not being aware of reasons against her belief (rather than a stronger requirement of being aware of reasons for her belief) but also appears to argue that such reasons cannot be relevant to knowledge. In this spirit, Faulkner attributes the following argument to McDowell:

- (1) Suppose we are not entitled to take things at face value (ie., take apparent expressions of knowledge as such).
- (2) Knowledge from testimony requires a listener be in a position to argue for the truth of what is said.
- (3) The listener's argument must consist in something that is neutral between hearing from someone that *p* and hearing someone say that *p*.

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<sup>5</sup>See in particular Fricker [1994].

<sup>6</sup>McDowell's theory is cited in footnote 9.

- (4) Such a reason must be an inductive reason and therefore not a truth-guaranteeing reason.
- (5) Such a reason cannot support knowledge.

Therefore

- (6) Listeners are entitled to believe testimony in the absence of reasons for thinking the testimony true [Faulkner 2011, pp. 101-102].

The point of testimonial disjunctivism is that a listener's knowledge can be grounded in a reasons that is *both* factive *and* reflectively accessible to the listener. Indeed, for McDowell, this is a necessary condition of making sense of knowledge at all. This also makes testimonial disjunctivism seem like an endorsement of the anti-reductionist (A2).

The case can be made even stronger with the observation that McDowell's vocabulary does speak of entitlements. According to McDowell '[s]omeone who can truly make a claim of that ["I see that..."] form has an entitlement, incompatible with any possibility of falsehood, to a claim whose content is given by the embedded proposition. The entitlement consists in the visual availability to her of the fact she would affirm in making that claim' [McDowell 2002, p. 98]. Individuals thus enjoy an entitlement to appeal to factive premises, on McDowell's view.

All of this notwithstanding, there are significant differences between testimonial disjunctivism and the anti-reductionist (A2). The sense of entitlement that McDowell has in mind is entirely different to the sense of entitlement that Burge and other traditional anti-reductionist theorists have in mind. The difference can be brought out by considering cases outside the paradigm case of knowing. Consider a case in which a speaker's testimony that  $\varphi$  is a lie, but the listener has no reason to suspect this. According to Burge, the listener is entitled to believe the speaker's testimony. The entitlement that Burge identifies comes from various *a priori* connections, which culminate in an entitlement to take testimony at face value unless one is aware of reasons against doing so.

By contrast, according to McDowell, the listener is *not* entitled to believe that  $\varphi$ . According to McDowell, someone's entitlement consists in a fact being made available to her. In a situation where the speaker's testimony that  $\varphi$  is a lie, the fact that  $\varphi$  is not made available to her. The result is that, according to McDowell's testimonial disjunctivism, the listener is *not* entitled to believe the speaker's testimony. Outside a paradigm case, where a speaker's testimony expresses knowledge, her testimony does not make the fact available to the listener in the same way and thus the grounds of the listener's entitlement are absent.

Where Burge's entitlement amounts to a general right to presume that testimony is sincere and competent, unless one is aware of reasons against doing so, McDowell's does not. In a paradigm case of a tourist being told by a knowledgeable local the whereabouts of the cathedral, McDowell states that 'the tourist is entitled to his belief about where the cathedral is [...] but I do not think that is because he is exercising a general presumption of sincerity and competence' [McDowell 1994, p. 218, n. 211]. The entitlement to believe what the speaker says consists in the same things that make it the case, according to testimonial disjunctivism, that the listener has available to her a *reason* for her belief.

The similarities between testimonial disjunctivism and the anti-reductionist (A2) are thus superficial. Both claim that the kind of reasons reductionist theories identify are irrelevant to knowledge from testimony. But their reasons for this are quite different. For the anti-reductionist, it is because reasons in general are irrelevant. Listeners are entitled to believe what speakers say unless they are aware of reasons against doing so and they are so entitled regardless of whether or not the speaker's testimony is an expression of something she knows. According to testimonial disjunctivism, on the other hand, a listener is entitled to her belief just in those cases in which she has a factive reason reflectively accessible to her. Where the speaker's testimony is not an expression of something she knows, the listener is not so entitled.

In light of this, I think we should conclude that testimonial disjunctivism is as much a reductionist theory as an anti-reductionist theory. There are points of commonality between testimonial disjunctivism and the anti-reductionist (A2), but equally, there are points of commonality between testimonial disjunctivism and the reductionist (R2). Like traditional anti-reductionism, testimonial disjunctivism denies the need for a listener to have reflectively accessible reasons for believing the speaker's statement. Like traditional reductionism, testimonial disjunctivism denies the claim that listeners have a general entitlement to presume that speakers are sincere and competent.

The result is that, the observations made by Lackey and Faulkner notwithstanding, testimonial dualism is no closer to the traditional anti-reductionist theory than it is to the traditional reductionist theory. Whilst it is true that there are substantial differences between testimonial disjunctivism and the traditional reductionist theory, there are equally substantial differences between testimonial disjunctivism and the traditional anti-reductionist theory. This is important.

4. As I stated before, the value of establishing the place of testimonial disjunctivism in the landscape of traditional theories is more than merely exegetical. Emphasising the differences between testimonial disjunctivism and traditional anti-reductionist approaches is key to understanding why testimonial disjunctivism is not undermined by arguments that have traditionally been placed against anti-reductionist theories. Having characterised testimonial disjunctivism as a version of traditional anti-reductionism, both Lackey and Faulkner argue that it can be undermined by arguments that they develop against traditional anti-reductionist theories. I believe that testimonial disjunctivism's distinctive commitments mean that it is far from clear that these arguments are successful against testimonial disjunctivism.

Faulkner presents the *Argument from Cooperation* against traditional anti-reductionist theories. The argument begins with the observation that speakers and listeners enter into conversations with distinctive practical interests. Speakers say things in order to be believed. Sometimes, it is in their interests to have listeners believe true things, other times it is in their interests to have listeners believe false things. In either case, speakers want to be believed. Listeners, however, want to believe what speakers say only if they are saying true things. There is thus, by default a conflict of interests between speakers and listeners. Listeners want speakers to be trustworthy, whereas speakers want to be untrustworthy, by saying false things when it suits them [Faulkner 2011, p. 6].

On this basis, Faulkner concludes that believing what someone says without being aware of independent reasons—the kind of reasons reductionist theories identify—for doing so is irrational. Faulkner thus states that 'the acceptance of testimony must be backed by reasons if it is to be reasonable' [Faulkner 2011, p. 6]. On the face of it, one might think that this is simply a clash with the testimonial disjunctivist's claim that a listener can have available to her a factive reason that comes from the speaker's testimony. If a listener is in possession of such a reason, one might object that there is no need for further reasons of the type that Faulkner identifies. In the central case, the listener has available to her a reason that would seem to supplant such a reason.

Nonetheless, Faulkner's objection is not so easily assuaged. There are reasons for thinking that, if the Argument from Cooperation is sound, then testimonial disjunctivism ought not to allow that the distinctive factive reason is available to a listener if she is not aware of the kind of reasons for believing the speaker that reductionist theories emphasise. The Argument from Cooperation appears to show that, by default, there are reasons against believing the speaker available. The fact that it might be in the speaker's interests to lie would seem to provide the listener with a reason for thinking against believing the speaker. And this, would seem to entail that a listener avoiding doxastic irresponsibility, in McDowell's terms, only if the listener has available the kind of reasons that reductionist theories emphasise.

In this form, Faulkner's objection does not license a complete rejection of testimonial disjunctivism. If it is successful, it shows that McDowell's account of the conditions under which a factive reason is reflectively accessible is mistaken. Instead of merely being unaware of reasons against believing the speaker's testimony,

the listener must be aware of reasons *for* believing the speaker's testimony. It would seem, however, that this is compatible with the central thesis of testimonial disjunctivism; that in certain cases, a listener's knowledge is grounded in a reason that is both factive and reflectively accessible to her.

The Argument from Cooperation, which Faulkner uses to reject traditional anti-reductionism thus does not conclusively undermine testimonial disjunctivism. Faulkner's argument does not stop here, however. In addition to the Argument from Cooperation, Faulkner provides an argument to the conclusion that factive reasons are simply not within the range of what is reflectively accessible to listeners. At the centre of this argument is the following statement:

Let me—the author, Paul Faulkner—tell you something about myself. When I was schoolboy I was a member of Phoenix Athletic Club. And I came third in the school senior cross-country race [Faulkner 2011, p. 132].

The difficulty for testimonial disjunctivism comes from the observation that these statements are phenomenologically similar. One is true and an expression of knowledge from Faulkner. The other is a lie. But, as Faulkner points out, there is not obviously any reason presented to us that identifies the true statement as true. We are, contrary to testimonial disjunctivism, not presented with any kind of factive reason that is reflectively accessible to us. Each statement seems, as far as we are aware, as plausible as the other.

This seems to impugn the testimonial disjunctivist claim that a listener's knowledge can be grounded in reflectively accessible factive reasons. One of these statements is an instance of a paradigm case, but no such reason seems to be available. Faulkner thus states that, even epistemological disjunctivism is plausible with respect to perceptual knowledge, it is not plausible with respect to the epistemology of testimony. In Faulkner's words:

The testimonially presented fact just does not 'impress itself' in the way that perceptually presented facts do. As such, it is just not plausible to suppose the knowledge of my high school years that the former testimony makes available to you makes it reasonable for you to believe that I am telling the truth with this statement [Faulkner 2011, p. 132].

Whilst the phenomenology of Faulkner's case seems accurate, it does not undermine testimonial disjunctivism. Recall that, according to testimonial disjunctivism, a listener's knowledge can be grounded in a reason that is both factive and reflectively accessible to her, in paradigm cases of knowledge from testimony. The key is the fact that this claim is limited to paradigm cases of knowledge from testimony. It is just not plausible that Faulkner's case is such an instance.

In discussing paradigmatic cases of perceptual knowledge, Pritchard suggests that such cases must be epistemically good both *objectively* and *subjectively*. In other words, the situation must be one in which the relevant cognitive processes are ones that reliably give rise to true beliefs and they are situated in an environment that is conducive to their doing so.<sup>7</sup> Equally, it must be the case that the believing subject is not in possession of reasons that entail that she ought to doubt the belief in question [Pritchard 2012, pp. 29-30]. The idea is that this type of case is, by anyone's standards, a central case of perceptual knowledge.

Plausibly, this is what McDowell has in mind in describing the paradigm case of knowledge from testimony. It is one that is objectively good, in that the speaker's testimony is an expression of her knowledge and subjectively good in that the listener is not doxastically irresponsible (whatever that is taken to mean) in believing the speaker. But Pritchard emphasises the importance of environmental factors in defining the paradigm case of perceptual knowledge. These are important to the status of paradigm cases. And it is these environmental factors that explain why testimonial disjunctivism is not undermined by Faulkner's putative counterexample.

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<sup>7</sup>In the case of perception, Pritchard identifies the relevant cognitive processes as those in the believing subject. In the case of testimony, they may or may not include those situated in the speaker.

Environmental factors are important because it seems as though being in the wrong type of environment can undermine one's claim to knowledge. In an environment where there are many convincing facsimiles nearby, one cannot come to know that there is a barn merely by looking at the only genuine barn [Goldman 1976, p. 773]. This is why Pritchard's point, that a case being one that is epistemically objectively good depends on the environment being conducive to the formation of true beliefs, is important.

The fact that a paradigm case of knowledge is one in which the local environment is appropriately conducive is important to seeing why Faulkner's counterexample does not undermine testimonial disjunctivism. The case that Faulkner identifies is not a paradigmatic case of knowledge from testimony and thus not a case in which testimonial disjunctivism takes it that a factive reason is reflectively accessible to a listener. It is not one in which the environment is conducive to reliably forming true beliefs.

In Faulkner's case, there is a true statement and also a false statement that is indistinguishable from the true one. This means that the perceptual case is like the one in which someone is confronted by a genuine barn when there are other convincing facsimiles in the environment. This, however, is not a paradigm case of perceptual knowledge since the case is not objectively good. Equally, the case Faulkner describes is not a paradigm case of knowledge from testimony, since the case is not objectively good. The result is that, the fact that Faulkner's observation that there is no marked phenomenological difference between the true statement and the false one is unproblematic for testimonial disjunctivism. For this is not the type of case in which testimonial disjunctivism claims that a factive reason is reflectively accessible to the listener.

Faulkner's argument thus fails to undermine testimonial disjunctivism. In virtue of its distinctive commitments, testimonial disjunctivism is also untroubled by Lackey's argument against anti-reductionism. Like Faulkner's objection, Lackey's argument against anti-reductionism targets the claim in (A2)—that the kind of reasons that reductionist theories identify are not a necessary condition for knowledge from testimony. Lackey's argument considers a case of someone who finds what appears to him to be a diary dropped by an alien. Inside, it appears to be written that, whilst exploring Earth, some of the inhabitants of the alien's home planet have been eaten by tigers. The subject treats the apparent diary entry as testimony and takes it at face value, coming to believe that tigers have eaten some of the inhabitants of the alien's planet.

Against anti-reductionist theories, Lackey notes that, in this case it is highly unintuitive that the subject can come to know in this way. The formation of the subject's belief exhibits the kind of irrationality that is incompatible with him coming to know. This is because there are various problematic possibilities that the subject cannot rule out. The possibility of standard alien practice being to produce works that would appear to be diaries but are actually works of science fiction being one and the possibility of aliens using a language superficially similar to English but with different semantic content being another. The writing is in fact a statement and it is in fact reliably produced and an expression of the alien's knowledge. But the listener has no reason to rule out these various possibilities. In light of this, Lackey concludes that 'it seems plainly irrational epistemically for him to form the belief in question on the basis of the alien's testimony' [Lackey 2008, p. 169].

This objection might be problematic for a traditional anti-reductionist theory, according to which a listener is entitled, in virtue of facts that are neutral between good and bad cases of testimony, to accept what is presented as true unless she is aware of reasons against doing so. It is altogether less clear, though, that this is problematic for disjunctivist theories. Given that testimonial disjunctivism is committed to claiming only that a listener comes to know in a particular way in a particular type of paradigm case, it might be that the kind of case that Lackey describes is outside the scope of testimonial disjunctivism. For all the reasons that Lackey identifies, to do with the speaker being unusual and the listener having little knowledge of her, the situation is an unusual one. These features, however, might well be taken to entail that that the case is beyond the scope of testimonial disjunctivism.

One might counter with the response that this meets the conditions that McDowell sets out. In writing the diary entry, he speaker *does* give expression to her knowledge and, in doing so, puts it into the public domain.

And the listener is not aware of any consideration against the proposition that some of the inhabitants of the alien's planet have been eaten by tigers. The listener's belief therefore meets the standards for avoiding doxastic irresponsibility identified by McDowell. With this in mind, one might contend that the response claiming that this kind of case is outside the scope of testimonial disjunctivism is wrongheaded.

Even if this counterargument were successful, however, it would only establish that the kind of conditions that McDowell outlines are not sufficient for a paradigm case of knowledge from testimony. Since it is not a case that all theories would accept as an instance of knowledge from testimony, it cannot be the kind of paradigm case that testimonial disjunctivism is about. This, however, is a minor objection. The central thesis of testimonial disjunctivism—that a listener's knowledge can be underpinned by reasons that are both factive and reflectively accessible to her—can be maintained even if McDowell's account of the paradigm case in which this is true is mistaken.

It thus seems as though this strategy for testimonial disjunctivism is unlikely to be successful. Testimonial disjunctivism is not to be undermined by a straightforward counterexample involving a case in which a listener putatively does not come to know what the speaker says but, according to testimonial disjunctivism, is in possession of reflectively accessible factive reasons for her belief. Any such case must be one in which it is intuitive that the listener does not gain knowledge by believing the speaker. But such a case is not apt to be the kind of paradigm case that testimonial disjunctivism is concerned with. It is not so obvious that traditional anti-reductionist theories have this escape route available to them. They claim that a listener's entitlement to believe what a speaker says can be available to the listener outside paradigm cases of knowledge from testimony. Disjunctivists are committed to no such claim.

5. The foregoing discussion indicates that there might be grounds for optimism concerning the viability of an epistemological disjunctivist approach to knowledge from testimony. It seems that the epistemological disjunctivist's distinctive resources are of substantial value in combating the problems traditionally associated with anti-reductionist theories of knowledge from testimony. In spite of this, however, I am unable to give an epistemological disjunctivist approach to knowledge a wholehearted endorsement. Like other epistemological disjunctivist theories, the epistemological disjunctivist theory of testimony is limited in scope to paradigm cases of knowledge. The trouble for testimonial disjunctivism, however, is that a paradigm case of knowledge from testimony is virtually impossible to specify in an uncontroversial way. Without a clear account of what a paradigm case of knowledge from testimony is, one cannot give a wholehearted endorsement of testimonial disjunctivism; or even get properly clear on what it amounts to.

In the previous section, I suggested that the fact that the epistemological disjunctivist claim is limited in scope means that it cannot be undermined by the kind of counterexamples presented against traditional anti-reductionist theories. But this depends on the kind of paradigm case that the epistemological disjunctivist view is concerned with being articulated in sufficient detail. There is, however, substantial room for doubt over whether or not this can be achieved. And this might undermine the efficacy of the epistemological disjunctivist responses considered in the previous section.

The criteria provided by Pritchard, in terms of the case being one that is both subjectively good and objectively good might seem to be instructive here. We have already seen that a case in which a speaker expresses her knowledge and the listener comes to believe her without being aware of reasons against doing is not sufficient for the kind of paradigm case of knowledge from testimony that is the subject of testimonial disjunctivism. In light of Lackey's case of believing an entry in an alien diary, however, one might object that a listener simply not being aware of any reasons against believing what the speaker says, but must be aware of reasons in favour of believing the speaker's testimony.

In light of this, we might think that a paradigm case of knowledge from testimony is one in which the speaker's testimony is reliably produced, an expression of her knowledge and the listener is aware of reasons for

believing the speaker's testimony. The status of this as a paradigm case, however, is problematic at best. There is a question of whether or not, in such a case, the listener forms her belief in the speaker's testimony using the reasons for believing the speaker's testimony that she is aware of. We might think that she either does or does not. But either answer is problematic to establishing the case as a paradigm case of knowledge from testimony.

In a case where the subject does not use the reasons for believing the speaker's testimony that she is aware of in forming her belief in what the speaker says, those of a reductionist sympathy will not accept that this is a paradigm case of knowledge from testimony. Indeed, they will not accept that it is a paradigm case of knowledge from testimony at all. Those who are sympathetic to reductionism are liable to claim that a listener who forms a belief in what a speaker says without using reasons for doing so that she is aware of does not thereby come to know the truth of what the speaker says. The epistemic paradigm case of knowledge, in which everything is epistemically ideal, is therefore not such a case.

By contrast, however, in a case where the subject *does* form her belief by using reasons for believing the speaker that she is aware of, the case is not a paradigm instance of testimonial knowledge according to those of an anti-reductionist disposition. Those who are of anti-reductionist sympathies typically maintain that the type of case in which a listener believes what the speaker says by using reasons that she is aware of, the listener's belief is not distinctively based on the speaker's testimony. Rather, it is based on the listener's own reasons—the reasons that the listener herself uses in forming her own belief. Whilst anti-reductionists typically allow that such beliefs might constitute knowledge, they do not allow that these are paradigm cases of knowledge from testimony.

This means that the kind of paradigm case of knowledge from testimony is difficult to specify in a way that the paradigm case of knowledge from perception is not. And this makes it difficult to see what an epistemological disjunctivist theory of knowledge from testimony might amount to. One might think that the disjunctivist responses to the arguments against traditional anti-reductionist approaches given in the previous section depend on a clear idea of what the paradigm cases of testimonial knowledge might look like. But this is not so. In the same way that Holmes can know that Moriarty is not the criminal without knowing who is by knowing that the fingerprints at the crime scene are not Moriarty's, one can know that the kind of paradigm case is not the kind that is presented against anti-reductionist theories without knowing precisely what it is. So whilst there is reason for optimism concerning the viability of an epistemological disjunctivist theory of knowledge from testimony, the difficulties concerning the details of the view still warrant an element of caution in the optimism.

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