

Testimonial Justification:  
Reductionism, Anti-Reductionism  
and Dualism

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# Theories of Testimonial Justification

- Consist in two claims:
  - (1) What testimonial justification consists in.
  - (2) Which beliefs are supported by testimonial justification.
- Traditionally people talk about *reductionist* and *anti-reductionist* theories.

# What's Reductionism?

- Bit hard to say.
- Some people think it's about what testimonial justification consists in.
- Others think it's about what beliefs are supported by testimonial justification.

# Nonetheless!

- This theory is reductionist:

(R1) A listener's belief is supported by testimonial justification only if she has reasons for thinking the speaker's testimony is true.

(R2) Testimonial justification consists in such reasons.

# Anti-Reductionism

- There's the same confusion going on here.
- But this theory is definitely anti-reductionist:

(A1) A listener's belief does not depend on her having reasons for thinking the speaker's testimony is true.

(A2) Testimonial justification does not consist in such reasons.

# Middle Ground

- There's clearly room between these two positions.
- Dualist theories think that (something like) (R1) is true and that (A2) is true in some form.
- Lackey and Faulkner defend this conjunction in different ways.

# Dualist Theories

- So, in different ways, dualist theories are characterised by their endorsement of the following:

(D1) A listener's belief is supported by testimonial justification only if she has reasons for thinking the speaker's testimony is true.

(D2) Testimonial justification does not consist in such reasons.

# The Big Question

- What's the relationship between the reasons in (R1) and the listener's belief?
- More specifically, is the belief *based on* the reasons?
- I think that either way, dualist theories have a problem.



# A Negative Answer:

- Suppose the belief does NOT have to be based on the listener's reasons.
- It's now hard to see what they're supposed to be doing.
- Dualist theories take it that the reasons are supposed to make the listener's belief rational.

# The Basing Relation

- The basing relation is supposed to be the relation that beliefs and reasons enter into when the reasons bear on the beliefs.
- In cases where they are not suitably related, the reasons do not rationalise the belief.
- A negative answer thus leaves (D1) unmotivated.

# A Positive Answer

- Suppose the dualist says they *do* have to be based on the reasons in (D1).
- If the listener's belief *is* based on those reasons, then surely those reasons *are* part of her justification.
- Now it seems that (D2) is false.

# Overdetermination

- We can put the point in terms of overdetermination.
- Where the listener bases her belief on her reasons, these justify her belief as well as the factors dualist theories identify.
- Or at any rate, we need an account of why they don't.

# Inferential Justification

- Most theories of justification have *some* account of how reasons justify beliefs.
- Lackey's theory is reliabilist, so reasons shape the process involved.
- Faulkner's theory explicitly states that such reasons can justify beliefs.

# Objection 1: That's Not the Point!

- The dualist (D1) is not the same as the reductionist (R1).
- We might think that not *all* reasons justify, some merely rationalise.
- And it's only the rationalising ones that dualists think are necessary.

# Still Missing Something...

- That much might be fine, but that's not the problem.
- Justifying reasons are *a fortiori* rationalising reasons.
- And there's still the question about what happens in *this* case.

# Response: The Reasons are NEVER Good Enough

- Lackey suggests that a listener's reasons are never sufficient.
- This is because they can't *guarantee* a connection to reliably formed testimony, no matter how good they are.
- So there's no overdetermination– and hence no problem... right?



# Wrong

- This seems to lead to a pretty far-reaching scepticism.
- It involves claiming that inductive reasoning is NEVER justified.
- And even other reliabilists don't want to say this.

# Reductionism Again

- This is no problem for reductionist theories.
- Reductionist theories deny (D2).
- Hence they think that beliefs DO have to be based on reasons.
- But also that the reasons DO justify the beliefs.

# Anti-Reductionism Again

- There is also no problem for anti-reductionist theories.
- Anti-reductionist theories deny (D1)
- So justification does *not* require such reasons.
- And thus beliefs do not have to be based on them.

# In Summary

- There are reasons to be dualist.
- But there's also a problem with it— it's hard to motivate both the claim that the reasons in (D1) are necessary and the claim that they don't justify (even in good cases).
- So it's all very confusing.
- But that's what makes it cool... right?