

The Nature of Testimonial Justification

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Abstract

It's generally agreed that testimony can be a source of knowledge and justified belief. The epistemology of testimony concerns itself with explaining how this can be the case. This thesis begins by identifying three types of explanation. According to the first explanation, my testimony can induce a justified belief in you because you use the reasons that you have available to you to infer the truth of what I say from the fact that I said it. According to the second explanation, my testimony can induce a justified belief in you because the processes involved in you forming the belief on the basis of my testimony are suitably reliable. And according to the third explanation, my testimony can induce a justified belief in you because I have justification for what I say and my testimony allows you to form a belief that's supported by this justification.

Having identified three different types of explanation, I argue that neither the first nor the second type of explanation can give a full account of testimony as a source of justified belief. The idea is that a notion of justification transmission is indispensable to a complete epistemology of testimony. I begin by establishing what justification transmission amounts to (and what it doesn't amount to) and defend the idea from its various critics. Next I turn to consider the first explanation and offer an example that illustrates why it can't give a complete account of justification from testimony by itself. Lastly, I discuss the third explanation and argue that it too fails to provide a satisfying framework for understanding how testimony is a source of justified belief.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Testimony

A tourist in an unfamiliar city wants to know where a local landmark is. She asks the nearest bystander. The bystander happens to be a local who knows where the landmark is and she tells the tourist. The tourist takes the bystander's word for it and forms the corresponding belief about the whereabouts of the landmark.¹

In a philosophy department, a student walks past a member of staff's office and overhears her talking on the telephone. The student hears the member of staff say that this week's visiting speaker will arrive at midday. Based on this, the student forms the belief that the visiting speaker will arrive at midday.

An astronomer records her observations carefully in her diary to keep accurate notes for herself. On the evening of January 25th, she records that it is too cloudy to see anything clearly. Months later, another astronomer finds her records. She sees the original astronomer's entry and comes to believe that it was too cloudy to see anything on January 25th.

These three cases illustrate a basic phenomenon. People come to believe things because of what others say. If we individually went through our beliefs and threw out the ones that depended in some way on what other people say, then there wouldn't be much left. In fact, there might not be anything. As Elizabeth Fricker observes, '[w]e humans are essentially social creatures, and it is not clear that we do or could possess any knowledge at all which is not in some way, perhaps obliquely, dependent on testimony' (Fricker, 2006b, p. 225). In a similar spirit, Richard Fumerton states that:

Setting aside radical skeptical concerns, it seems almost a truism that

¹John McDowell (1994b) introduces this as a paradigm case of forming a belief on the basis of someone's testimony.

much of what we believe is based on the testimony of others. Beliefs about the distant past are based on the writings of historians. Beliefs about the microworld are based on the word of physicists. Beliefs about the names, ages, histories, habits, likes, and dislikes of friends are largely based on information those friends provide. There are important distinctions one can make between kinds of testimony (Fumerton, 2006, p. 77).

Each of these above cases features an instance of testimony. The bystander's directions, the member of staff's statement and the astronomer's records are all instances of testimony. The result is that testimony isn't just speech. There is no speech in the astronomer case. Rather, she writes things down.² But what she writes down is surely testimony nonetheless. Just as the tourist's belief is based on the bystander's testimony in the first case, the later astronomer's belief in the last case is based the original astronomer's testimony.

Once we observe that so many of our beliefs depend, in some way, on the testimony of others, it becomes clear that, unless such beliefs can be *justified*, somehow, we're in trouble. If it turns out that there's *no* way for beliefs based on what other people say to be justified, then we're in a bad way *epistemically*—it seems that we're stuck with a *sceptical* problem.

This is particularly forceful when we consider the institution of science. Most of us think that science provides us with our best theories of how the world is. As such, if any of our investigations into the world result in our or forming justified beliefs about the world, then our scientific investigations do. But testimony is indispensable to scientific investigation. Modern scientific investigations are too complex to be conducted by a single individual. Scientific investigations require expertise in too broad a range of areas for one person to have the relevant expertise. And the amount of work required for someone (even with the necessary expertise) to complete the relevant investigation makes it impossible for anyone to do so within a lifetime.

John Hardwig (1985; 1991) discusses real-world examples of such cases. Leaving the technicalities aside, however, it's easy enough to see how testimony facilitates collectively learning things that we can't individually. An example from Alvin Plantinga (1988) makes this point. Suppose that I know that the east and west coasts of Australia have a particular shape and you know that the north and south coasts of Australia have a particular shape. By using testimony to share what we know with each other, we can both come to know the entire shape of the coast of Australia.

We thus have an extensive epistemic dependence on testimony. Both our

²See Jennifer Lackey (2008) on diary entries as testimony.

everyday and our scientific beliefs depend on what other people say. Obviously, however, we don't *always* form justified beliefs by believing testimony. The observation that we surely *sometimes* form justified beliefs by believing what people say, combined with the observation that we don't *always* form justified beliefs by believing what people say motivates two questions. The first is *what* makes the difference between the beliefs that are justified and the beliefs that aren't. The second is *which* beliefs are justified and which aren't. Taken together, answers to these questions yield an *epistemological theory of testimony*.³

This thesis gives an answer to the former question, the question of what supports beliefs based on testimony. A natural way of thinking about the way that a speaker's testimony brings about a justified belief in a listener is that it allows the speaker to *share* her knowledge with the listener. Applied to the case of the student overhearing the member of staff, the member of staff makes her knowledge available to the student overhearing her. In the case of the astronomers, the original astronomer recording her observations about the night sky in her records puts the later astronomer in a position to acquire her knowledge. Different epistemological theories of testimony treat this idea of a speaker sharing her knowledge with a listener with differing degrees of seriousness. I'll say more about competing theories of testimony in 1.3, but it's worth noting here that some theories treat the idea of a speaker sharing her knowledge with a listener as metaphorical, whereas others take the idea of sharing knowledge very much more seriously. In this thesis, I'll argue for a theory that takes the idea very seriously.

According to the theory I argue for, testimony allows a speaker to share what she knows with a listener, at least sometimes. The idea is that a knowledgeable speaker's testimony can put a listener in a position to acquire her knowledge. In the case with the tourist and the bystander, the bystander knowing the whereabouts of the local landmark and telling the tourist allows the tourist to share the bystander's knowledge. In the case of the case of the student overhearing the member of staff, the member of staff makes her knowledge available to the student. Lastly, in the case of the astronomers, the original astronomer's writings make her knowledge available to the later astronomer.

Competing theories reject this idea. They accept that the idea of a speaker sharing her knowledge with a listener might be a conversationally appropriate way of talking about testimony, but they hold that it's strictly and literally false. It's a useful metaphor, but it's incorrect to think that the idea of testimony sharing knowledge reveals any particularly deep truth about how testimony yields justified beliefs. A more accurate way of thinking about testimony, according to

³Exactly how far the answers to these questions are connected is an interesting question, but one that's mainly beyond the scope of this thesis.

these theories is that testimony allows a listener to add to the things that she justifiably believes. The listener doesn't acquire the speaker's knowledge, but she uses the speaker's testimony to form her own belief, which might itself be justified. Justification from testimony is thus similar to justification from instruments and other natural signs in the world. In the same way that someone can work out the age of a tree from the number of rings inside it, or the temperature of some liquid in a glass by using a thermometer, someone can work out the truth of what a speaker says from the fact that she says it.

Ernest Sosa (2006) expresses this in the following:

Interpretative knowledge, I am suggesting, is a kind of instrumental knowledge. You ask a question of someone. Assuming sincerity and linguistic competence, what they utter reveals what they think (and on similar assumptions reveals also what they say). This means that we can tell what they think (or say) based on a deliverance conveyed by their utterance. Interpretative knowledge of what a speaker thinks (says) is thus instrumental knowledge that uses the instrument of language. Language is a double-sided instrument serving both speaker and audience. Hearers rely on the systematic safety of the relevant deliverances. Not easily would the speaker's utterance deliver that the speaker thinks (says) that such and such without the speaker's indeed thinking (saying) that such and such (Sosa, 2006, p. 121).

In the case of the tourist and the bystander, this means that the tourist can come to know the whereabouts of the local landmark from the bystander's testimony, but this isn't through the bystander *sharing* what she knows. Rather, it's through the listener forming a belief that's justified by factors other than those that justify the speaker's belief. The listener figures it out for herself. Applied to the student in the philosophy department, the member of staff saying that the visiting speaker will be arriving at midday allows the student to come to know this on grounds that the speaker doesn't have, which come from the student's reasoning. Lastly, in the case of the astronomers, finding the original astronomer's diary allows the later astronomer to figure out that it was too cloudy to see anything clearly on January 25th. She doesn't acquire the speaker's justification for this, but uses her own reasons to figure this out.

The differences between these theories will be brought into sharper relief throughout this thesis. Before considering epistemological theories of testimony further, however, it's important to get the more general epistemological background in view. As I see it, competing theories of what justifies beliefs based on testimony come from applying different background epistemological commitments to the domain of testimony. With this in mind, it's easier to understand

theories of justification from testimony with the background epistemological commitments illuminated. In the next section, I'll introduce these background commitments.

1.2 Epistemic Justification

For ease of reference, let's call any answer to the question of what justifies beliefs based on testimony a claim about the *nature of justification from testimony*. My above claim that certain theories of the nature of justification from testimony come from applying different background commitments about what justifies beliefs more generally (claims about the *nature of justification in general*) to testimony might be controversial. Nonetheless an uncontroversial starting point should be that theories of the nature of justification from testimony are, at the very least, connected at least in *some* important sense to theories of the nature of justification in general.

I therefore propose to frame the discussion here using a vocabulary that's more commonly associated with theories of justification in general than testimony. The common vocabulary in the epistemology of testimony characterises theories of testimony in terms of *reductionism* and *anti-reductionism*. Rather than using these terms, however, I propose to classify theories in terms of *internalism* and *externalism*, which is more usually found in discussions of justification in general. I'll return to the reasons for avoiding the vocabulary of reductionism or anti-reductionism in 1.4. Meanwhile, however, I'll introduce the distinction between internalist and externalist theories.

Traditional internalist theories hold that an individual's justification for her belief is a matter of the individual's reasons for that belief. The individual's reasons for that belief are the things that she can bring to bear in support of her belief. If I say that it will rain tomorrow and you ask me why I believe this, or how I know this, or something along those lines, then what I come up with is (according to internalists) what justifies my belief.⁴

One consequence of internalist theories, as described here, is that they hold that if an individual can't give *any* reasons in support of her belief, then her belief is unjustified. Suppose that someone is suddenly struck by a hunch that the ambient temperature is 17°C, though she has no reasons for thinking that this hunch is any indication that it's actually 17°C and no other reasons for thinking that the temperature is 17°C. By internalist lights, the individual's belief is unjustified.⁵ All of this can be encapsulated in the following principle:

⁴See McKinnon (2012), Gerken (2012).

⁵See Keith Lehrer (2000). Laurence Bonjour (1985) also employs a similar case, using it to motivate internalist theories from the observation that an individual who had such a capacity but had

- (I) An individual's justification for her belief that p is exclusively a matter of her reasons for thinking that p is true.

By contrast, defenders of externalist theories think that there can be more to what justifies an individual's belief than just her reasons. According to externalist theories, an individual's belief can be justified by factors that can't access in a way that would allow her to cite them in support of her belief. This doesn't mean that an individual's reasons *never* justify her belief. Nor is it to say that an individual's reasons can't have any bearing at all on the justificatory status of her beliefs. Rather, externalist think that an individual's justification can be a matter of more than just her reasons. This amounts to the following principle:

- (E) An individual's justification for her belief that p can be more than a matter of her reasons for thinking that p is true.

The thought behind (E) is that justification and truth are connected in an important sense. It seems that, if one of your beliefs is justified and another isn't, then the belief that's justified is more likely to be true than the one that isn't.⁶ It should be more likely to be true *exactly because* it's justified. Justified beliefs come in different degrees, though. I might have two beliefs that are both justified, but one might be more justified than the other. It would seem that justification and truth are connected in such a way that beliefs that are more justified than are more likely to be true.

Defenders of internalist theories don't deny that justification and truth are connected.⁷ Nonetheless, the primary motivation for internalism comes from the intuitive idea that individuals without reasons don't form justified beliefs. Internalists think this is most important. The primary motivation for externalist theories is the thought that justification is connected to truth.

One of the major driving thoughts behind externalism is that it seems that internal factors alone can't adequately respect the connection between justification and truth. Duncan Pritchard points this out stating that 'by internalist lights one can enjoy an excellent epistemic standing for one's worldly beliefs and yet it won't thereby follow that any of these beliefs are thereby likely to be true' (Pritchard, 2012b, p. 2). Once it emerges that, for all it may *seem* that things

reasons for thinking that it wasn't sensitive to facts would be paradigmatically *unjustified* in her belief. I'll come back to these cases in 4.3.

⁶A word about what is meant by 'likely to be true' is in order here. One might think that, if I have a justified belief about the past and an unjustified belief about the past, if both beliefs are in fact true, then they are equally 'likely to be true.' This sense of 'likely to be true' isn't what's meant here. The relevant sense of 'likely to be true' here can be brought out by considering a case, where all you know about two of my beliefs is that one is true and the other is false and one is justified and the other is not. Given *only* this information, you should think that the justified one is true and the unjustified one is not—the justified one is, from your perspective, more 'likely to be true.'

⁷See Bonjour (1985), Conee and Feldman (2004).

are a particular way, they might in fact not be that way, it emerges that a belief might be strongly justified by internalist lights whilst not being supported by any factors that make the belief likely to be true.⁸

Another way of thinking about the difference between internalist and externalist theories is in terms of the value of having reasons for one's belief. According to internalist theories, reasons are valuable because they justify beliefs.⁹ Externalist theories, however, think that there's more to justification than someone's reasons, so they don't think this. Rather, they think that reasons function as a way of recognising justified beliefs.¹⁰

Denying that justification is a matter of reasons means that externalist theories need some other account of what justifies beliefs. Obviously, not *everything* that an individual is unaware of can bear on her belief. Some factors that support an individual's belief only if she's aware of them. But not all of them. Suppose that I believe that a particular tree is 107 years old, just based on a hunch. The fact that the rings on the inside of the tree *would* indicate that it's 107 years old if I were to look at them doesn't justify my belief that the tree is 107 years old if I don't actually look at them. Any externalist theory thus needs to say *which* factors can bear on an individual's belief without her being aware of them. A typical externalist theory holds that an individual's justification is a matter of the *reliability* of the processes involved in her belief's production.

This yields the following principle, which characterises reliability theories:

- (R) An individual's justification for her belief that p is exclusively a matter of the reliability of the process by which she formed her belief that p .

All reliability theories endorse (R). The simplest reliability theories hold that the process by which an individual formed her belief being reliable is both necessary and sufficient for her belief being justified. Robert Audi (1995; 2006) endorses this with respect to knowledge—holding that an individual knows that p if and only if the process by which the individual formed the belief that p was formed is a reliable one. More sophisticated reliability theories hold that the process by which an individual formed her belief being reliable is necessary for her belief being justified and *sometimes* sufficient for an individual's belief being justified. Put another way, the reliability of the process involved in the production of the individual's belief justifies her belief *other things being equal*.

Obviously, this raises the question of what exactly *other things being equal* is supposed to amount to. The point of the *other things being equal* clause is to avoid the

⁸I develop this line as an attack on internalist theories of testimony in 5.2-5.5.

⁹Of course, it might be the case that not all reasons justify beliefs, even by internalist lights. Nonetheless, the point is that internalist theories hold that nothing *other than* reasons justify beliefs.

¹⁰This is especially clear in Alston (1996).

thought that an individual's belief is justified in virtue of the processes involved in its production being reliable, even if the individual has reasons for thinking that the process isn't actually reliable.¹¹ Returning to the example above, where someone is suddenly struck by the thought that the ambient temperature is 17°C, suppose that, rather than having no reflectively accessible reasons concerning the truth of her belief, or the reliability of the process by which her belief was formed, the individual actually has reflectively accessible reasons for thinking either that her belief about the temperature is *false*, or that the process by which her belief was formed is in fact *unreliable*.¹² It's intuitive that such a case doesn't involve a justified belief and a reliability theory with an *other things being equal* clause can return this result.

The above distinction between internalist theories and externalist theories, a paradigm of the latter involving understanding justification in terms of reliability, marks the divide between two grand traditions. I propose to use this distinction to offer a taxonomy of theories of justification from testimony. The reasons for deploying this particular taxonomy rather than the more traditional distinction between reductionism and anti-reductionism are given in 1.4.

1.3 Theories of Justification from Testimony

With an understanding of the scope of testimony and an overview of competing theories of epistemic justification in hand, it's time to connect the dots and present the theories of the justification that testimony provides that are central to this thesis.

In 1.1, I set out two ideas about the epistemology of testimony. According to one type of theory, testimony offers a speaker a chance to share her knowledge with the listener and offers the listener a way of acquiring or inheriting the speaker's knowledge. According to the second type of theory, testimony doesn't do this, but it allows the listener to expand her own knowledge. There are two ways of developing this latter approach. One is from within the framework of an internalist theory of justification in general; the other within the framework of a reliability theory. These frameworks were described in 1.2.

A paradigmatic internalist theory of testimony takes it that justification from testimony is a matter of the reasons that a listener has for thinking that a speaker's testimony is true. In the same way that internalist theories hold that beliefs in general are justified by the believer's reasons for thinking that they are true, they hold that beliefs based on testimony are justified by the listener's reasons

¹¹See Goldman (1979).

¹²BonJour (1985) discusses variants of these cases.

for thinking that the speaker's testimony is true. The resulting theory can be expressed in the following principle:

- (TI) A listener's justification for her belief based on a speaker's testimony is exclusively a matter of her reflectively accessible reasons for thinking that the speaker's testimony is true.

I will return to develop internalist theories of justification from testimony further in Chapter 4. As a preliminary, however, it is worth observing that internalist theories take it that a listener must respond to a speaker's testimony in a particular way in order to form a justified belief on the basis of what she says. The idea is that a listener's belief in a speaker's testimony will only be justified when she responds to the speaker's testimony by considering what the speaker says in the light of her own background beliefs about the situation. The listener's background beliefs about the situation are just the kinds of things that are the listener's reflectively accessible reasons. One way of expressing this thought is through the idea that a listener's belief is justified, according to internalist theories, only if the listener treats the speaker's testimony as *evidence*.¹³ I develop this idea of treating a speaker's testimony as evidence further in 2.2.

This internalist characterisation of the justification that testimony provides is different to the justification provided by other sources (such as perception or instruments) only in that it has a different input, in the form of a speaker's testimony. Where justification from perception comes from the deliverance of an individual's perceptual faculties, the justification testimony provides is marked out by being the product of a speaker's testimony. Common to both types of justification, on internalist accounts, is the idea that it is the listener's own reasons that justify her belief, whether that is a belief in what a speaker says, or a belief in the way that things appear to her. In this way, testimony allows the listener to use her background reasons to expand her set of justified beliefs.

A paradigmatic reliability theory also offers a theory of the justification that testimony provides that expands on the thought that testimony allows a listener to enhance her own set of justified beliefs, rather than give a speaker the opportunity to share her justification with a listener. As observed in 1.1, reliability theories hold that the way in which people come to form justified beliefs on the basis of testimony is similar to the way in which people come to form justified beliefs on the basis of deliverances by instruments.¹⁴ There is more than one way in which one might spell out the basic idea behind reliability theories to yield a reliability theory of the justification provided by testimony. This is because

¹³James Pryor (2000) describes this idea of forming a justified belief by treating something as evidence.

¹⁴See Sosa (2006).

there are a variety of processes involved in a listener forming a belief based on a speaker's testimony. The basic idea behind reliability theories of testimony is the following:

- (TR) An individual's justification for her belief in a speaker's testimony that p is a matter of the reliability of the testimonial process involved in the production of the listener's belief that p .

A reliability theory of justification from testimony needs to give us an account of what *the process* is, in the case of beliefs based on testimony. Since there are a variety of processes involved in a situation where a listener forms a belief based on a speaker's testimony, there are a number of candidates for being *the process*. There are, to begin with, a set of processes situated in the speaker. These are the processes that go into the production of the speaker's testimony. By way of illustration, again, here is Sosa on instruments:

It is the thermometer that is a reliable instrument, not just its screen. What is the difference that makes this difference? True, the screen needs the aid of the attached thermometer. But so does the thermometer need to be properly situated. It cannot be insulated, for example, nor can the temperature in the relevant space be too heterogeneous. If the thermometer is to tell the ambient temperature reliably, it must be appropriately situated in certain contingent ways, ways in which it might not have been situated, perhaps *very easily* might not have been situated (Sosa, 2006, p. 117)

As Sosa observes, where an instrument reliably delivers true readings, it does so because of the processes that contribute to that reading being reliable. As with instruments, so with testimony; there is a set of processes involved in the production of the speaker's testimony. In the case with the astronomer, for example, the processes involve the astronomer setting up the telescope, looking through the instrument, correctly interpreting what he sees and recording this in his diary. The set of these processes gives us our first candidates for an account of *the process* relevant to justification from testimony. In 6.4, I discuss reliability theories that focus on processes situated within the speaker.

Of course, testimony doesn't just involve a speaker. There are processes that are situated in the listener. Another set of candidates for being *the process* in the case of beliefs based on testimony comes from these processes. In the example concerning the departmental seminar, the listener has to correctly interpret what is being said, recognise that it is being said by a member of staff and decide how to respond to the testimony on the basis of these interpretations. Suppose that the listener has a faculty which, unbeknownst to her, allows her to accurately

distinguish true testimony from false testimony. One might think that this faculty can justify the listener's belief, at least, if one is an externalist about the justification testimony provides. There is thus another set of processes that a reliability theory might seek to identify as *the process*. I will discuss this type of reliability theory further in 6.4.

It is obvious enough how the latter theory amounts to an endorsement of the thought that testimony allows a listener to expand her own knowledge, rather than benefiting from a speaker coming to share her knowledge with a listener. According to the latter theory, the listener's faculty for reliably identifying testimony as true or false is what allows her to expand her knowledge base. It might be less obvious how the former reliability theory, which explained justification from testimony in terms of the reliability of processes situated in the speaker, amounts to a version of this type of theory. To see how this type of theory amounts to a way of claiming that testimony allows a listener to expand her own knowledge base, it is useful to return to the above discussion of the relationship between justification from testimony (at least, as reliability theories conceive of it) and justification from instruments.

According to Sosa's discussion, what mattered in the case of justification from instruments, is that the deliverances of an instrument are reliably produced. In the same way, according to the theory of justification from testimony under discussion here, what matters is that the testimony a speaker produces are reliably produced. It seems natural to think that using instruments is a way for an individual to expand her own knowledge about the world. It certainly seems more natural to say this than that the instrument comes to share what *it* knows with the person who believes things based on its deliverances.¹⁵ In the same way as someone uses an instrument to expand her knowledge about the world, the idea is that a listener uses a speaker to expand her knowledge of the world. The similarity between justification from instruments and justification from testimony, as the kind of reliability theory under discussion here identifies, explains how this kind of theory amounts to thinking of testimony as a way of a listener adding to her own knowledge base.

The theory that I defend in this thesis is unlike both internalist and reliability approaches to testimony. Unlike internalist approaches, the theory I defend endorses (E) rather than (I). Unlike reliability theories, however, the theory I defend also denies that justification from testimony is exclusively a matter of the reliability of some process involved in the testimonial exchange. The result is that the theory I defend denies (R) as well. It thus amounts to a new way of

¹⁵Whilst Sosa (1983) observes that there might be a sense in which instruments like thermometers "know" the ambient temperature, the sense in which instruments know things isn't sufficiently robust to sustain the idea that an instrument comes to share its knowledge with the person using it.

spelling out (E). Rather, the theory I defend holds that, at least sometimes, the listener's belief in the speaker's testimony brings it about that the listener's belief comes to be justified by the speaker's justification for what she says. This yields a theory that endorses the following basic principle:

- (T) Where a listener's belief that p is based on a speaker's testimony, it can be that the listener's justification for p is just a matter of the speaker's justification for p supporting the listener's belief that p .¹⁶

A useful label to attach to the theory that I am defending in this thesis is *transmission*. It is fairly straightforward how a transmission theory amounts to a way of setting out the idea that testimony allows a speaker to pass on her knowledge to a listener. According to transmission theories, testimony can make it the case that an individual forms a belief that is justified by the speaker's own justification for what she says. Testimony thus allows a speaker to *transmit* her justification to a listener, at least sometimes. This approach to the question of the nature of justification from testimony marks out transmission theories from competing internalist or reliability theories.

Furthermore, transmission theories, unlike competing theories, hold that the justification that testimony can provide is unlike the justification provided by inference or instruments. As I will explain in Chapters 2 and 3, transmission theories can leave open that justification from testimony *can* be inferential or instrumental, but they are characterised by their claim that testimony (at least sometimes) makes available justification that is unlike the justification made available by inference or instruments. Put another way, transmission theories endorse the claim that there is a kind of distinctively *testimonial justification*.

Having said that transmission theories take it that believing testimony is unlike other ways of forming beliefs, there is a sense in which transmission theories treat testimony as similar to memory. The idea is that, in the same way that memory serves to allow someone at a later time to benefit from justification from an earlier time, testimony serves to allow a listener to benefit from a speaker's justification for what she says.¹⁷

In this thesis, I thus propose to discuss theories of the justification that testimony provides using the three categories that I have identified above: transmission theories, internalist theories and reliability theories. Grouping theories together in this way is relatively uncommon in the literature.¹⁸ One consequence

¹⁶I will do more to spell out this basic principle in Chapter 2.

¹⁷Tyler Burge (1993) and Michael Dummett (1994) discuss this relationship between testimony and memory. The basic idea that testimony and memory are epistemically similar isn't distinctive to transmission theories, however. Lackey (2008) argues for similarity between testimony and memory from within the framework for a reliability theory.

¹⁸Two notable exceptions are Richard Fumerton (2006) and Mikkel Gerken (2013).

of grouping theories in the way that I have here is that it groups together theories that have similar background epistemic commitments about the nature of justification in general. In the next section, I suggest how the traditional taxonomy of theories is apt to miss these.

1.4 Reductionism and Anti-Reductionism

As observed above, there are two claims that go into a theory of justification from testimony. One is a claim concerning the nature of justification from testimony—about what this justification is a matter of. The other is a claim concerning the scope of justification from testimony—about which beliefs are supported by this justification. Traditionally, theories of justification from testimony are divided into reductionist and anti-reductionist theories. Exactly what the distinction amounts to is controversial though. Some take it that the divide between reductionist and anti-reductionist theories refers to claims about the nature of justification from testimony, whereas others claim that it is about the scope of justification from testimony. A third way of looking at the distinction takes it to be about both the nature and the scope of justification from testimony. In this section I set out competing accounts of the distinction and explain why I'm not going to use the distinction (whatever it is) in this thesis.

Elizabeth Fricker (1994; 1995) offers one way of characterising the distinction. This is the original understanding of the distinction between reductionism and anti-reductionism. According to Fricker, anti-reductionism is characterised in terms of the endorsement of a thesis stating that '[o]n any occasion of testimony, the hearer has the epistemic right to assume, without evidence, that the speaker is trustworthy, i.e. that what she says will be true, unless there are special circumstances which defeat this presumption' (Fricker, 1994, p. 125). As Fricker conceives of the distinction, this thesis is both necessary and sufficient for an anti-reductionist theory. Reductionist theories, on the other hand, are distinguished by their denial that listeners have such an epistemic right. The division between reductionism and anti-reductionism, on this way of drawing the distinction, is a division about the scope of justification from testimony. Where reductionist theories hold that a listener's belief is justified only if the listener has reasons for thinking the speaker's testimony true, anti-reductionist theories deny this.

By contrast, Lackey (2008) describes the distinction as one concerning the nature of justification from testimony. More specifically, Lackey characterises the distinction between reductionist and anti-reductionist theories as a disagreement about who does the epistemic work in a situation where a listener forms a justified

belief on the basis of a speaker's testimony. Reductionists, as Lackey conceives of them, claim that the epistemic work is done exclusively by the listener. One way is by the listener being able to reliably sort true from false testimony, in the fashion described above. Anti-reductionists, by contrast, claim that the epistemic work is done exclusively by the speaker, by producing reliable testimony, for example (Lackey, 2008, pp. 176-177). This can be put another way as reductionist theories claiming that justification from testimony is exclusively a matter of facts to do with the listener and anti-reductionist theories claiming that it is exclusively a matter of facts to do with the speaker.

Paul Faulkner (2011) offers a third account of the difference between reductionist and anti-reductionist theories. Where Fricker characterised the distinction as a disagreement about the scope of justification from testimony and Lackey characterised the distinction as a disagreement about the nature of this justification, Faulkner characterises the distinction in terms of a disagreement about *both* nature *and* scope. According to Faulkner's characterisation, reductionist theories are constituted by *two* claims, one about the nature of justification from testimony and one about the scope (Faulkner, 2011, p. 27). As Faulkner characterises the distinction, reductionist theories are thus unified by a negative claim about the nature of justification from testimony (a claim about what justification from testimony is *not*) and a positive claim about the scope of justification from testimony.

Anti-reductionist theories, according to Faulkner's account of the distinction between reductionist and anti-reductionist theories, deny both of the claims that reductionist theories endorse. Where reductionist theories hold that a listener's belief in a speaker's testimony can be justified only if the listener has reasons for thinking that the speaker's testimony is true, anti-reductionist theories claim that a listener's belief can be justified even when she has no such reasons. In addition, where reductionist theories deny that there is any distinctive form of testimonial justification, where the speaker's justification supports the listener's belief, anti-reductionist theories endorse this idea (Faulkner, 2011, p. 79). Like reductionist theories, according to this characterisation, anti-reductionist theories are constituted by both a claim about the nature and the scope of the justification that testimony can provide.

One way of illustrating this disagreement is by considering a traditional reductionist theory. Disagreements about reductionism and anti-reductionism notwithstanding, it is universally agreed that the following theory is reductionist:

(R1) A listener's belief in a speaker's testimony is justified only if the listener has some reflectively accessible reasons for thinking that the speaker's testimony is true.

And

- (R2) A listener's justification for her belief in a speaker's testimony is exclusively a matter of her reflectively accessible reasons for thinking that the speaker's testimony is true.

The conjunction of (R1) and (R2) is reductionist by the lights of any of the above characterisations. Furthermore, it isn't just that it is *a* reductionist theory. It is generally agreed that the conjunction of (R1) and (R2) gives *the* reductionist theory; if any theory is reductionist then the conjunction of (R1) and (R2) is. The claim in (R1) concerns the scope of beliefs supported by justification from testimony and denies that a listener's belief can be so justified even if the listener has no reflectively accessible reasons for thinking that the speaker's testimony is true. This means that the theory is reductionist by Fricker's characterisation. The claim in (R2) about the nature of justification from testimony states that such justification is just a matter of the reasons that (R1) refers to. Since this identifies justification from testimony in terms of factors to do with a listener, it is also reductionist by Lackey's lights. Lastly, since (R1) states that a listener having reasons for thinking the speaker's testimony true is a necessary condition on her belief in the speaker's testimony being justified and (R2) denies that testimony can transmit justification from speaker to listener, the theory is reductionist according to Faulkner's characterisation.

In the same way that combining (R1) and (R2) gives a theory that everyone agrees is *the* reductionist theory, everyone agrees that joining the following two claims gives *the* anti-reductionist theory:

- (A1) A listener's belief in a speaker's testimony can be justified even if the listener does not have some reflectively accessible reasons for thinking that the speaker's testimony is true.

And

- (A2) A listener's justification for her belief in a speaker's testimony can be a matter of the speaker's justification for what she says coming to support the listener's belief.

The theory that results from combining (A1) and (A2) is anti-reductionist, according to any of the characterisations of anti-reductionism given above. Firstly, (A1) is clearly an endorsement of the claim that Fricker says is the claim that makes a theory anti-reductionist. The claim about the nature of the justification that testimony can provide in (A2) fits Lackey's characterisation of anti-reductionism perfectly. As observed above, talk of a speaker's justification coming to support a listener's belief yields a theory that takes the idea of a speaker

sharing her justification with a listener seriously. Since (A2) amounts to a statement of transmission, it means that the epistemic work is done by the speaker, rather than by the listener. This makes it anti-reductionist by Lackey's account of anti-reductionism.¹⁹ The combination of (A1) and (A2) is also anti-reductionist by Faulkner's characterisation, since it is exactly this pair of claims that Faulkner characterises as anti-reductionist.

The disagreement about exactly what it is for a theory to be reductionist or anti-reductionist makes the distinction a tricky one to work with. This is a practical difficulty of a sort. By itself, it might not make a decisive case for doing away with the distinction between reductionism and anti-reductionism. There is, however, a more serious theoretical problem with the distinction. Assuming one cuts the distinction in one of the ways outlined above, the distinction misleadingly places theories that have little in common in the same category and places theories that are fundamentally similar, in terms of their most basic epistemic commitments on opposite sides of the distinction, creating the illusion that they are polar opposites of one another. This is a more serious problem than the above practical difficulty. It makes it hard to place general arguments against particular camps of theories, since the theories in each camp are disparate and, in terms of fundamental epistemological commitments, have more in common with members of other theories.

In order to see this, we can compare Faulkner's theory with Tyler Burge's (1993) theory. Both theories hold that testimony can function to transmit justification from speaker to listener. Indeed, Faulkner's account of justification transmission is explicitly built on Burge's account of justification transmission.²⁰ Burge and Faulkner thus share a claim about the nature of justification from testimony. This is a major epistemological commitment, but it is obscured by an account of the distinction that is drawn along the lines Fricker describes. Where Burge endorses (A1) above, Faulkner denies it. According to Faulkner's theory, a listener's belief being justified depends on her belief in the speaker's testimony being supported by reasons because to believe what a speaker says without reasons for thinking that the speaker's testimony is true is irrational. Nonetheless, the listener's reasons only serve as an *enabling* condition according to Faulkner's theory.²¹ They merely serve to connect the listener up to where the real justificatory action is; the speaker's justification for what she says. Casting one theory as

¹⁹There is an added complication here, however, since Lackey's discussion of anti-reductionism formulates anti-reductionism in terms of reliability, rather than in terms of transmission (Lackey, 2008, p. 167). I will return to this in Chapter 3. This, however, is because Lackey's discussion takes it as established that reliability is the correct way to think of justification from testimony. A transmission theory would be anti-reductionist by Lackey's lights, however Lackey doubts that it is the strongest anti-reductionist theory available.

²⁰I will return to discussing theories of justification transmission in 2.3.

²¹See Dancy (2004) on reasons as enabling conditions.

reductionist and the other as anti-reductionist, which is a consequence of applying Fricker's distinction, obscures the essential similarities between the theories.

Lackey's account of the distinction has similar problems, though they manifest themselves in considering different theories. Lackey's account of the division artificially groups together theories that have fundamentally *different* epistemological commitments. First of all, consider the paradigmatic reductionist theory given by (R1) and (R2). The theory is, by the lights of the internalist/externalist divide, a firmly internalist theory. Now, consider a token theory, according to which justification from testimony is a matter of the reliability of the processes situated in the listener that enable her to distinguish between true and false testimony. Importantly, according to this theory, the listener needn't have any reflectively accessible reasons for thinking that she has the capacity to distinguish between true and false testimony in this fashion.²² This theory is obviously externalist, in the terms of the internalist/externalist divide.²³

These two theories have fundamentally *different* basic epistemological commitments. One takes it that justification is a matter of an individual's reflectively accessible reasons and the other takes it that justification is a matter of the reliability of a process. Nonetheless, since both theories take it that, where a listener's belief in a speaker's testimony is justified, the justification that supports it is a matter of some fact to do with the listener, Lackey's theory classes both theories as reductionist. This is in spite of their fundamentally different approaches to the nature of justification from testimony. The result is that Lackey's account of the divide between reductionist and anti-reductionist theories characterises theories that are fundamentally different in terms of their epistemological commitments together.

Faulkner's account of the distinction faces similar problems. Faulkner classifies both Burge's (1993; 1997) and Sanford Goldberg's (2007; 2010) theories as anti-reductionist, but Lackey's (2008) theory as reductionist.²⁴ This taxonomy gives the appearance of Goldberg's theory and Burge's theory having more in common than Goldberg's theory and Lackey's theory do. In terms of fundamental epistemological commitments, however, this isn't the case. Goldberg and Lackey both hold that justification from testimony is a matter of the reliability of some process, though they disagree about exactly what the relevant process is. Burge disputes this, holding that justification from testimony is a matter of a listener's evidence. Yet Faulkner's characterisation of the theories situates Burge's theory with Goldberg's theory and Lackey's theory on the opposite side of the

²²Faulkner (2011) attributes this theory to Fricker (1994).

²³I will discuss this theory in more detail in 6.4.

²⁴This is extremely strange, since Lackey denies (R2) and Goldberg denies (A2) but this is nonetheless how Faulkner classifies the theories.

divide.

This is the main reason that the distinction between reductionist and anti-reductionist theories isn't a helpful one for approaching the question of what justifies belief based on testimony. For the distinction to be a useful one, it would need to respect the natural divisions between theories of justification from testimony. The problem with the existing taxonomy in terms of reductionism and anti-reductionism is that it cuts across these natural divisions. Whichever way one draws the distinctions between reductionist and anti-reductionist theories, it is liable to either artificially align theories that are fundamentally different, or else present theories that are fundamentally similar as diametrically opposed to each other. Of course, one could reconstruct the distinction between reductionist and anti-reductionist theories in terms that did follow the contours of the fundamental epistemological commitments of theories of justification from testimony. This, however, would just be to realign the distinction in terms of the existing distinction between internalist and externalist theories. As a result of all of this, the discussion here is organised around a taxonomy of theories that employs the vocabulary of internalism and externalism, rather than reductionism and anti-reductionism.

1.5 The Structure of the Thesis

In the rest of this thesis I set out and defend a transmission theory of the nature of justification from testimony. I begin in Chapter 2 by giving a fuller account of what transmission theories amount to. Whilst talk of the idea of justification transmission and transmission theories is common in the literature, what is essential to transmission theories has, at least as I see it, been frequently misunderstood. Theories of justification from testimony are generally articulated against a set of background commitments about the nature of justification more generally. The result is that the idea of justification transmission has been articulated in a variety of different ways. In Chapter 2, I set about articulating the basic idea behind transmission theories in a way that doesn't invoke considerations distinctive to any particular theory of justification in general.

Having set out the basic idea behind transmission theories, in Chapter 2 I also give an account of what does and what doesn't follow from this basic idea. The general confusion (as I see it) yields a corresponding confusion about what transmission theories imply. I also illustrate the *prima facie* naturalness behind the basic idea associated with transmission theories. Transmission theories, I suggest, offer a natural way of thinking about how each of us depends on others in an epistemic sense.

Transmission theories have come under sustained, heavy and intensive criticism recently, particularly from defenders of reliability theories. In Chapter 3 I defend transmission theories against counterexamples and criticisms from elsewhere in the literature. Once we see what transmission theories are really trying to get at, I suggest that we can see why these counterexamples either miss the mark completely or don't really get to the core of what matters to transmission theories.

In Chapter 4 I turn to consider internalist theories of justification from testimony. I begin by giving an account of internalist theories. Internalist theories hold that a listener's belief being in a speaker's testimony being justified depends on the listener using her background reasons for thinking the speaker's testimony true to figure out for herself that the speaker's testimony is true. In other words, as observed above, the listener must treat the speaker's testimony *as evidence*. Testimony has epistemic value, according to internalist theories, because it is evidence of what the speaker says.²⁵ Having discussed various versions of internalism, I then turn to make an argument against internalist theories in Chapter 5. I do this by identifying an intuition about testimonial justification that internalist theories can't accommodate. Intuitively, I suggest, we think that a listener is epistemically better off, other things being equal, in virtue of being told by a speaker with better justification for what she says. The rest of Chapter 5 is devoted to showing that theories grounded in an internalist framework are unable to accommodate this thought.

In Chapter 6 I move to consider reliability theories. Like transmission theories, reliability theories are *externalist*. According to reliability theories, justification from testimony is a matter of the reliability of some process intrinsic to the testimonial exchange. As such, they generally deny that justification from testimony is a matter of listener's background beliefs about the truth of the speaker's testimony.

Having given an overview of reliability theories, in Chapter 7 I turn to consider a challenge to reliability theories of justification in general that I think does translate into a serious problem for reliability theories of justification from testimony. The problem I consider is related to the generality problem. Reliability theories of justification in general take it that justification consists in the factors that make the relevant process reliable. The generality problem charges that reliability theories are unable to identify the nature of any particular process in a convincing principled way. I argue that this problem is compounded by considering the epistemology of testimony, in such a way that reliability theories of justification from testimony face a distinctive problem than reliability theories of

²⁵This idea was introduced in 1.3.

justification in general don't face.

Whilst there might be responses that reliability theories can give to the generality problem in its most common form, I argue that it becomes particularly pressing for reliability theories of justification from testimony. This is because paradigm cases of a listener's belief in a speaker's testimony being justified involve a variety of processes. The problem is thus distinct from the generality problem, even though there are similarities between the two. It's not that there is an identifiable process that is difficult to characterise. Rather, it's that it's difficult to identify the process in the first place. Chapter 7 surveys some accounts reliability theories might give and argues that any of them is unsatisfactory.

Chapter 2

Transmission Theories

2.1 Introduction

Transmission theories claim that, sometimes, a speaker can share her justification with a listener or, equivalently, the listener can acquire the speaker's justification. The idea is that this can happen when a listener *takes a speaker's word for it* that what she says is true. Transmission theories hold that this makes testimony distinctive as an epistemic source—no other way of forming beliefs facilitates the passing of justification from one person to another.

To be clear on this distinctiveness, it's worth noting that one can give similar accounts of justification from memory or inference. One might give a theory of memory according to which memory can connect you to justification that you previously had.²⁶ Likewise, with inference, one might think that competent deduction transfers your justification for one set of your beliefs to another.²⁷ Transmission theorists think that testimony does something similar.

We already have the following in view from 1.3:

- (T) Where a listener's belief that p is based on a speaker's testimony, it can be that the listener's justification for p is just a matter of the speaker's justification for p supporting the listener's belief that p .

Already, we're in a position to say more about what "can be" in (T), amounts to. The idea is that testimony transmits justification only if a listener takes a speaker's word for it.²⁸ We can thus add a first layer of *finesse* to (T) with the following:

²⁶As observed previously, Dummett (1994) describes such a theory of memory and compares it to transmission theories of testimonial justification. See also Owens (2006a).

²⁷See Wright (2004).

²⁸Note that this states a necessary condition, but not a sufficient one.

- (T*) Where an listener's belief that p is based on her taking a speaker's word for it that p , the listener's justification for p is a matter of the speaker's justification for p supporting the listener's belief that p .

As (T*) makes clear, the notion of taking a speaker's word for it is central to transmission theories. Understanding justification transmission requires understanding taking a speaker's word for it.

2.2 Taking a Speaker's Word

Taking a speaker's word for it is a way of responding to a speaker's testimony. A good way of getting an insight into taking a speaker's word for it is by considering what it's *not*. In this spirit, transmission theories distinguish taking a speaker's word for it from *treating a speaker's testimony as evidence*. I briefly mentioned this distinction in 1.3, but now is the time to expand on it further.

2.2.1 Trust

There are various ways of trying to explain the distinction between taking a speaker's word for it and treating a speaker's testimony as evidence. The first appeals to *trusting* a speaker. The idea is the following:

- (1) To take a speaker's word for it is to trust the speaker.²⁹

The trouble with this is that it's not clear what trusting a speaker is. This means that it's similarly controversial whether or not it's the same thing as taking a speaker's word for it.

For example, Fricker (2006a) talks about trust in such a way that trusting a speaker is entirely compatible with believing a speaker's testimony on the basis of reasons for thinking the speaker's testimony is true. Central to Fricker's discussion of trust is the question of when trust is epistemically proper. According to Fricker, trusting a speaker is epistemically proper just when it is based on reflectively accessible reasons for thinking that the speaker's testimony expresses knowledge (Fricker, 2006a, p. 596). The possibility of epistemically proper trust presupposes that trusting a speaker is compatible with believing the speaker's testimony on the basis of your reasons for thinking that the speaker's testimony expresses knowledge. On Fricker's conception of trust, the following are true:

- (T1) A listener's belief formed by trusting a speaker for the truth is justified only if the listener's trust is epistemically proper.

²⁹This idea goes back at least as far as Anscombe (1979).

- (T2) A listener's trust is epistemically proper only if it is grounded in her reflectively accessible reasons for thinking that a speaker's testimony expresses knowledge.

Therefore

- (T3) A listener's belief formed by trusting a speaker for the truth is justified only if it is grounded in her reflectively accessible reasons for thinking that a speaker's testimony expresses knowledge.³⁰

By contrast, Edward Hinchman (2005) thinks that trusting a speaker is completely *different* to responding to the speaker's testimony by considering your reflectively accessible reasons. Hinchman suggests that a listener can respond to a speaker's testimony in one of two ways. One involves the listener taking it that the speaker's testimony gives her an *entitlement*, understood here as a kind of epistemic right, to believe that the speaker's testimony expresses knowledge.³¹ Another involves a listener *not* taking herself to be so entitled. If the listener doesn't take herself to be so entitled, she might still believe what the speaker says, on the basis of her reflectively accessible reasons rather than because she takes herself to have an epistemic right, or she might not believe it at all (Hinchman, 2005, p. 565).

Hinchman thinks that trusting a speaker involves taking yourself to have an epistemic right to think that her testimony is true. This right comes *from the speaker's testimony*. Obviously, this is significantly different to Fricker's conception of trusting a speaker. Hinchman agrees with (T1), but denies (T2) stating that 'trust is epistemically reasonable when the thing trusted is worthy of the trust—as long as there is no evidence available that it is untrustworthy' (Hinchman, 2005, p. 578). The reasonableness of trust, according to Hinchman, depends on the speaker, not on the listener (as Fricker thinks).³² Hinchman thus denies (T2) and (T3).

Faulkner offers a third, disjunctive, account of trust. Faulkner takes trust to involve a dependence on someone and a particular attitude towards that dependence. Different attitudes underpin different types of trust. Faulkner identifies *predictive* trust, which is characterised by an attitude of expectation *that* the trustee will do as she has been trusted to, and *affective* trust, which involves an expectation *of* someone. The normative expectation involves taking it that the

³⁰In each of (T1), (T2) and (T3) respectively, Fricker might well endorse the stronger *if and only if* biconditional. For the purposes of the discussion here, however, all that is required is the *only if* claim.

³¹Hinchman attributes the notion of entitlement in question here to Burge (1993).

³²See also Owens' claim that 'we should treat testimony as preserving the rationality of the beliefs it transmits, much as memory does' (Owens, 2006a, p.164).

trustee ought to recognise your dependence on her and treat this as a motivation to do as you've trusted her to (Faulkner, 2011, p. 24).

Predictively trusting a speaker can be based on reasons for thinking that her testimony is true. Predictively trusting a speaker involves depending on her to tell the truth and expecting that she will. This expectation might be grounded in reflectively accessible reasons. Affective trust generates its own reasons.³³ According to Faulkner:

Where trust is predictive its practical rationality is straightforward. It is reasonable for [audience] *A* to rely on *S* ϕ -ing if *A* predicts that *S* will ϕ . However, a key feature of affective trust is that it is not grounded by any belief about the outcome [...] [I]n [affectively] trusting *S* to ϕ , the grounds of *A*'s attitude of trust are the belief that *S* can recognise his, *A*'s, depending on *S* ϕ -ing, and the presumption that this will move *S* to ϕ . [...] Consequently, the act of trust is rationally *self-supporting* in that it is based on an attitude of trust, which through implying the presumption that the trusted is trustworthy, gives a reason for trusting (Faulkner, 2011, pp. 150-151).

Faulkner's theory is thus different to those expressed by Fricker and Hinchman respectively. Unlike Hinchman's theory, Faulkner's theory doesn't deny (T2). Yet Faulkner's theory differs substantially from Fricker's. The crux of the matter is *independence*. According to Fricker's theory, the reasons that (T2) refers to must be independent of the fact that the listener trusts the speaker. Fricker doesn't think that the act of trusting itself can generate the kind of reasons that (T2) demands, but Faulkner thinks that it can. Thus, where Fricker's theory thinks of (T2) in the following way:

(T2.1) A listener's trust is epistemically proper only if the listener's trust is grounded in her reflectively accessible reasons, which are independent of the fact that the listener trusts the speaker, for thinking that a speaker's testimony expresses knowledge.

Faulkner's theory thinks of it as:

(T2.2) A listener's trust is epistemically proper only if the listener's trust is grounded in her reflectively accessible reasons, which might themselves come from the fact that the listener trusts the speaker, for thinking that a speaker's testimony expresses knowledge.

³³This makes Faulkner's notion of affective trust different to Hinchman's notion of trust. Where Faulkner argues that affective trust generates reasons, Hinchman denies this, arguing that trust fits in in the absence of reasons. See (Faulkner, 2011, pp. 151-159).

I'm not going to settle the question of what trusting a speaker amounts to here. The fact that trust is controversial is enough to make the point that it's hard to use to explain what taking a speaker's word for it involves. So I don't think that trust is helpful for understanding taking a speaker's word for it.

2.2.2 Believing a Speaker

There's too much philosophical controversy surrounding trust for it to be a suitable stopping point for understanding taking a speaker's word for it.³⁴ This isn't to say that trusting a speaker *isn't* the same as taking a speaker's word for it, but it is to say that, at this stage in the discussion, thinking of it this way doesn't help. There's distinction with less philosophical attention, that might be better suited to the current purpose.

Richard Moran (2005) distinguishes between *believing a speaker* and (merely) *believing a speaker's testimony*.³⁵ An alternative strategy for understanding taking a speaker's word for it comes from Moran's notion of believing a speaker. It can be expressed in the following:

- (2) To take a speaker's word for it is to believe the speaker.

The basic distinction between believing a speaker and believing a speaker's testimony comes out in the following: Where a listener believes a speaker's testimony, she believes what the speaker says. Where a listener believes a speaker, she believes what the speaker says *simply because the speaker said it*.³⁶ One might believe a speaker's testimony without believing the speaker. Even if I take you to be a con-man, I might still take it that what you say is true.³⁷ I might think that this is a rare occasion on which you're not trying to deceive me, or think that you're just misguided and thus actually saying something true. In either of these cases, Moran urges that it seems natural to say that I believe your testimony, but I don't believe *you* (Moran, 2005, p. 2). Believing a speaker thus involves believing the speaker's testimony in a particular way. Where I take you to be a con-man, I don't believe your testimony simply because you said it. I do believe what you say, but I do so because of other considerations, not just because you said it.

³⁴Other accounts are given in Baier (1986), Hardin (1996), Holton (1994), Jones (1996), Pettit (1995) and Wright (2010).

³⁵Edward Craig (1990) draws a similar distinction between treating someone as an *informant* as opposed to *as a source of information*.

³⁶For the purposes of this discussion, we can leave aside worries about deviant causal chains. A speaker saying that *p* might cause a brain surgeon to kidnap a listener and operate on her in such a way that the listener comes to believe that *p* and this wouldn't be the listener taking the speaker's word for it. This is what the notion of believing *simply because* rather than merely believing *because* is supposed to be doing here; excluding such deviant causal chains.

³⁷A case of a hypnotised speaker also makes this point. See Coady (1992) and Owens (2006b).

I think that understanding the distinction between taking a speaker's word for it and treating a speaker's testimony as evidence in terms of the distinction between believing a speaker and merely believing a speaker's testimony is problematic, though. The two distinctions aren't the same. The former is an *exclusive* disjunction, the latter isn't. In the case of the former, the listener *either* takes the speaker's word for it *or* treats a speaker's testimony as evidence, but she does *not* do both.³⁸ Believing a speaker, however, involves believing a speaker's testimony.

Compare this with the point that believing a speaker also involves believing the speaker's testimony. I can't believe you, but not what you say. The distinction between believing a speaker's testimony and believing a speaker thus doesn't match the distinction between taking a speaker's word for it and treating a speaker's testimony as evidence. Since the distinction between believing a speaker and believing a speaker's testimony is different to the distinction between taking a speaker's word for it and treating a speaker's testimony as evidence, I suggest that we should look elsewhere for the purposes of this discussion.

2.2.3 The Basing Relation

I think that the best way of understanding taking a speaker's word for it is by thinking of it in terms of the *epistemic basing relation*. We're after an account of different ways in which a listener can come to believe what a speaker says. Think again about a case where I believe you to be a con-man but nonetheless believe what you say. Suppose you tell me that you're from London and believe this because I detect it from the way that you speak rather than believing it simply because you said it.³⁹ Believing that you're from London by detecting how you speak is treating your testimony as evidence. Believing that you're from London simply because you said it is taking your word for it. The difference isn't that, in the first case, I have reflectively accessible reasons for thinking that your testimony is true, but in the second case I don't. I *might* have such reasons in the second case. Rather, the difference is that in the first case I *use* my reasons, but in the second case I don't. In epistemological terms, the idea is that I *base* my belief on these reasons in the first case whereas I don't in the second case.

The basing relation is the relation that holds between beliefs and reasons where the reason contributes to the belief's epistemic support. To get an initial idea of what it's about, think about a case in which an individual encounters various bits of evidence that his wife is having an affair. He finds suspicious emails

³⁸This contradicts the *Transindividual Thesis* that Frederick F. Schmitt (2006) defends. The extent to which these two form an *exhaustive* disjunction is something I will come back to in 3.6.

³⁹Audi (2004) and Katharine Hawley (2010) both discuss examples of this type.

in her account, she regularly disappears in the evening without explanation and someone even claimed to be the person that she is having an affair with. Despite his inability to explain any of this, he persists in his belief that she isn't having an affair, until one day a fortune-teller tells him that she is. At this point, he comes to believe that his wife *is* having an affair, not because he now regards any of his previous evidence as somehow compelling, but simply because the fortune-teller told him so.⁴⁰

Intuitively, the husband's belief is unjustified. It's unjustified because, even though he *has* good evidence for thinking that his wife is having an affair, he doesn't *base* his belief on that evidence. His evidence therefore doesn't justify his belief. Responding to a speaker's testimony by treating a speaker's testimony as evidence involves seeking to base one's belief on one's own reasons, unlike the individual in the fortune-teller case.

The basing relation grounds the distinction between treating a speaker's testimony as evidence and taking a speaker's word for it. In figuring out the truth of what you say by considering my own reasons, I base my belief in what you say on these reasons and thereby treat your testimony as evidence. This is only half of the story, though. We can also explain taking a speaker's word for it in terms of the basing relation. The idea is that, taking a speaker's word for it involves trying to base one's belief on *the speaker's* justificatory resources. Where I take your word for it, I seek to have my belief supported by your justificatory resources rather than my own.

One way of thinking about this is in terms of what it would be legitimate for a listener to appeal to in support of her belief in what the speaker says. A natural thing to think is that, where the listener treats the speaker's testimony as evidence, it's appropriate for her to cite her reasons for thinking that the speaker's testimony is true *and nothing else*.⁴¹ Where the listener takes the speaker's word for it, it doesn't seem appropriate for her to appeal to her own background reasons. Even if such reasons were available, the fact that the listener doesn't use them in forming her belief makes it inappropriate for her to then cite them in defence of her belief.

There's more to be said about taking a speaker's word for it than this. One might wonder exactly what you are supposed to say when you take a speaker's word for it and someone asks you why you believe what you do. This is where *passing the epistemic buck* appears in the literature. Benjamin McMyler (2011) makes heavy use of this. Where a listener is in the business of citing reasons in support of her belief, it's generally because someone has asked for them, or she thinks it would be appropriate for someone to ask for them, or something like

⁴⁰This is adapted from a case in Conee and Feldman (2004).

⁴¹Cf. Goldberg (2006).

that. In the case of testimony, a natural thing for someone to say in response is “[Speaker] S told me so.” McMyler expresses all of this in the following observation:

It is a general feature of epistemic agency that mature epistemic agents are under a standing obligation to respond to relevant epistemic challenges to what they believe, either by meeting the challenge or by giving up their belief. What is so peculiar about testimonial knowledge is that, insofar as the justification appropriate to testimonial knowledge involves the citing of an authority, a testimonial audience is entitled to defer relevant challenges back to the original speaker (McMyler, 2011, p. 62).⁴²

The final part of this observation appeals to *deferring relevant challenges*. Understanding this is crucial to understanding what goes on when a listener seeks to base her belief on the speaker’s testimony. Where a listener takes a speaker’s word for it that things are as she says they are, when challenged for the justification that supports her belief, she should direct the challenge towards the speaker. This is appropriate because, in taking the speaker’s word for it, the listener operates with the presumption that the speaker has justification for what she says, or knows what she says.⁴³ Seeking to base one’s belief on a speaker’s justification involves believing her testimony on the presumption that she has justification for what she says.

The basic idea behind taking a speaker’s word for it in terms of the basing relation, is basing one’s belief on the speaker’s justification, rather than one’s own. This involves believing on the presumption that the speaker has justification for what she says. And when one takes the speaker’s word for it, it’s appropriate to defer challenges back to the speaker in a way that isn’t appropriate when treating a speaker’s testimony as evidence.

Understanding the difference between treating a speaker’s testimony as evidence and taking a speaker’s word for in terms of the epistemic basing relation yields, I think, an explanation that is altogether preferable to those in 2.2.1 and 2.2.2. Unlike the explanation in 2.2.2, the explanation in terms of the basing relation respects the thought that treating a speaker’s testimony as evidence and taking a speaker’s word for it form an *exclusive* disjunction. In the same way that one *either* takes a speaker’s word for it *or* treats a speaker’s testimony as evidence, *but doesn’t do both*, a listener *either* seeks to base her belief on the speaker’s justification, *or* the listener’s justification *but doesn’t do both*.

⁴²Similar thoughts are expressed by Moran (2005) and Hinchman (2005).

⁴³Operating with the presumption that the speaker knows what she says bases the listener’s belief on what grounds the speaker’s knowledge—the speaker’s justification for what she says.

Another virtue of understanding the difference in terms of the epistemic basing relation is that the explanation is genuinely *reductive*—it puts a *conversational* distinction, to do with how listeners respond to what speakers say, in *epistemic* terms, to do with beliefs and epistemic justification. Unlike the account in 2.2.1, the account in terms of the basing relation also explains in the distinction in terms that are sufficiently basic.⁴⁴

A couple more points are worth making. For all I have said here, it's an open question as to how often listeners *actually* respond in either fashion. The claim is that there's a *conceptual* distinction to be made, regardless of how often we *actually* behave in either fashion. Likewise, Burge claims that:

I do not hold that we adults are in a high proportion of cases *a priori* entitled, all things considered, to particular beliefs acquired in interlocution. Perceptual elements are very frequently partly constitutive of our understanding. So understanding is often not purely intellectual. And our *a priori prima facie* entitlement to accept what we are told commonly needs empirical supplementation to override counterconsiderations (Burge, 1997, p. 23).⁴⁵

There may also be situations in which it's psychologically impossible for a listener to take a speaker's word for it. If you and I are both looking at a tomato and we are both aware of this, even if you tell me that there is no tomato before us, it might be that I just can't take your word for it. This is also compatible with the above account of taking a speaker's word for it.

There could also be a situation in which I can't take your word for it because I am already convinced that what you say is true. Suppose that you and I are looking at a tomato and you tell me that there *is* a tomato in front of us. In such a situation I might be unable to take your word for it because I can't detach my response to your testimony from my antecedent conviction that there's a tomato in front of us.⁴⁶

The fact that a the listener believes what the speaker says follows from the fact that the listener takes the speaker's word for it. The fact that the listener believes what the speaker says doesn't follow from the fact that the listener treats the speaker's testimony as evidence. A listener can treat a speaker's testimony as evidence and believe the opposite of what the speaker said. Suppose that I

⁴⁴The idea here is similar to what Grice and Strawson (1956) identify as the weaker interpretation of Quine's (1953) attack on the synthetic/analytic distinction. Explaining the notion of taking a speaker's word for it in terms of believing a speaker simply provides further concepts that themselves stand in need of explanation. All that this shows is that certain terms are co-extensive, rather than giving an adequately informative account of them.

⁴⁵This is in discussion of Burge's (1993) *Acceptance Principle*.

⁴⁶Moran discusses a similar case from Grice (1989) involving Herod presenting Salome with the severed head of John the Baptist (Moran, 2005, pp. 12-14).

have background reasons for thinking that you are systematically confused about round things and square things so that you take round things to be square and square things to be round. Because of this, when you tell me that something is round, I treat your statement as evidence that it's actually square.⁴⁷ This involves treating your testimony as evidence, but not as evidence of what you say.

Treating a speaker's testimony as evidence thus needn't involve believing what she says. This is another difference between taking a speaker's word for it and treating a speaker's testimony as evidence. For ease of discussion, in what follows, where I'm discussing treating a speaker's testimony as evidence, I'll focus on instances of treating a speaker's testimony as evidence of what she says.

Since a listener can't both seek to base her belief on her reasons and not seek to base her belief on these reasons, she can't both take the speaker's word for it and treat the speaker's testimony as evidence. As well as these two ways of responding to a speaker's testimony, I think that there's a third way, in the form of *relying* on a speaker.

2.3 Relying on a Speaker

The distinction between taking a speaker's word for it and treating a speaker's testimony as evidence provides a framework for explaining what relying on a speaker is and how it differs to the other ways of responding to testimony. Relying on a speaker is like taking a speaker's word for it in that it doesn't involve believing the speaker's testimony because of one's background reasons. But it's like treating a speaker's testimony as evidence in that it isn't distinctive to testimony.

2.3.1 Relying

It's time to revisit Sosa's observations about testimony in 1.1. According to Sosa, testimony from speakers is like the deliverance of instruments. Where people rely on instruments to yield true deliverances, *in the same way*, they rely on speakers to say true things. The distinction between taking someone's word for it and treating testimony as evidence can make sense of the idea that listeners treat speakers and instruments in the same way, since it allows that listeners can treat either testimony or the deliverance of an instrument as evidence. But this isn't what Sosa has in mind in aligning responses to instruments and testimony.

The kind of relying that Sosa has in mind involves relying on an instrument (or a speaker) in a way that isn't based on one's background beliefs about the instrument's accuracy. According to Sosa:

⁴⁷In this way, as Goldberg (2001) observes, even false testimony can yield knowledge.

Take the gauges that we face as driver of a late-model car. Most of us have a paltry conception of them as little more than screens, displays, that keep us informed about the amount of fuel in our tank, our speed, the rpm of our motor, etc. We take the display to be part of a fuller instrument that reliably delivers its deliverances. But who knows how the display on our dashboard reliably connects with its relevant subject matter? Our conception hardly extends beyond the distinctive screen or display (Sosa, 2006, p. 117-118).

Sosa's point here is that we don't rely on instruments because of our beliefs about them. Rather, we *assume* that the instrument is reliable. Sosa states that 'in thus *relying* we make manifest our assumption of *reliability* (Sosa, 2006, p. 118). Our belief isn't *based on* our background beliefs about the instrument. It's crucial to Sosa's theory that the assumption isn't equivalent to a belief. If it were, then relying would just be treating as evidence. Rather, it's similar to the presumption discussed in 2.2.3.⁴⁸

The kind of assumption that Sosa has in mind can't amount to a belief, because if it did, then justification from instruments would be inferential and would, intuitively, come from the background beliefs of the person making the inference. Instead of this, Sosa states that '[a] deliverance of a proposition by an instrument is epistemically reliable only if that proposition belongs to a field, and that instrument is so constituted and situated, that not easily would it then deliver any falsehood in that field' (Sosa, 2006, p. 117). What matters for justification, according to Sosa, is the reliability of the instrument (understood in terms of how easily it would yield a false deliverance).

Of course, there's an open question about whether or not and how often we *do* respond to instruments and speakers by relying on them as Sosa describes. But that isn't the question here. The question here is whether or not we *can* rely on speakers like this and what the epistemological significance of this relying is. In the same way that the fact that we generally respond to people by treating their testimony as evidence doesn't mean that we *can't* take their word for it, it also doesn't mean that we *can't* merely rely on them.

Relying on someone thus involves manifesting an assumption (in Sosa's words) that she's reliable. One obvious way of illustrating this distinction between belief and assumption is through the thought that reliance can be forced. You might be forced to rely on someone that you actually believe to be highly unreliable.

⁴⁸It's also similar to what Bonjour (1985) calls the *doxastic presumption*. As Bonjour states: 'it might seem plausible, at first glance, to construe the Doxastic Presumption as constituting a further *premise* to be employed in the justificatory arguments or at least as functioning like such a premise. But only a little reflection will show that such an interpretation is quite untenable' (Bonjour, 1985, p. 104). As with Bonjour, so with Sosa; the assumption that Sosa identifies shouldn't be understood as a premise from which things are to be inferred.

Suppose that I am away from home and thus have to rely on my housemate to put the bins out Sunday night. I might think that my housemate is lazy, forgetful and generally disinterested in such matters and therefore *believe* that he won't. But nonetheless I'm relying on him to and acting as though he will, which involves acting as though I have an *assumption* that he will.

The idea is thus that there are three ways of responding to a speaker's testimony. One can take the speaker's word for it, one can treat the speaker's testimony as evidence, or one can rely on the speaker. Each of these excludes the others. It's thus important to get clear on what makes relying on a speaker different to each of the other two responses.

2.3.2 Relying and Treating Testimony as Evidence

The main difference between relying on a speaker and treating a speaker's testimony as evidence is that you can rely on a speaker even when you have no beliefs about the speaker's testimony being true, whereas you can't treat the speaker's testimony as evidence without such beliefs. As observed above, it's crucial to Sosa's theory that the assumption that the speaker's testimony is reliable isn't a belief that the speaker's testimony is reliable. The motivation Sosa gives for this is that it just can't be the case that our beliefs in the deliverances of instruments are based on our background beliefs about their reliability, because too much of the time we just don't have the relevant background beliefs.

Relying on a speaker is thus different to treating a speaker's testimony as evidence. To reiterate, it isn't important whether or not we actually have or lack reasons and whether or not we actually base our beliefs on these reasons or ignore them. What matters is whether or not it's possible for a listener to act as Sosa describes.

As observed in 2.3.1, relying on a speaker involves an assumption of the speaker's reliability. But this might not be rational given the listener's background reasons. This doesn't mean that the listener can form a justified belief by relying on a speaker even though the listener has good reasons for thinking that the speaker's testimony is false. It might be that the listener's reasons for thinking that the speaker is unreliable prevent the listener's belief being justified. What it does mean, however, is that the listener can rely on the speaker even though it's unwise even by her own lights.

2.3.3 Relying and Taking a Speaker's Word

Relying on a speaker and taking a speaker's word for it involve a listener not using her background beliefs about the speaker's reliability. Both involve a pre-

sumption that doesn't amount to a belief. In the case of relying on a speaker, the presumption is simply one of reliability. In the case of taking a speaker's word for it, the presumption is that the speaker has justification for what she says. Taking a speaker's word for it and relying on a speaker thus differ.

Understanding the difference between taking a speaker's word for it and relying on a speaker in this way also supports the idea that relying is an attitude that can be taken in response to instruments, where taking someone's word for it can only be taken in response to a speaker. This is because taking a speaker's word for it involves the presumption that the speaker has justification for what she says and instruments don't have justification for things in any meaningful sense. It's thus incoherent to take an instrument's word for it, precisely because this involves treating it as something it isn't.

By contrast, however, we can coherently rely either on people or on instruments. This is because both people and instruments can produce reliable deliverances. It's uncontroversial that the reliability is achieved in different ways but they can be equally reliable. Since relying involves nothing more specific than the assumption of reliability, one can rely on either speakers or instruments.

The distinction between relying on a speaker and taking a speaker's word for it offers an insight into how to understand both notions. Where 2.2.3 left the story, in terms of a listener taking a speaker's word for it involving her not using her own background reasons in forming her belief, we're now in a position to give a more positive characterisation of what taking a speaker's word for it amounts to. Taking a speaker's word for it involves believing what a speaker says based on the assumption that the speaker has justification for what she says. This can be distinguished from a less subtle notion of relying on a speaker, which involves believing the speaker's testimony on the assumption that her testimony is reliably produced.⁴⁹

2.4 Justification Transmission

Transmission theories use the distinction between taking a speaker's word for it and treating a speaker's testimony as evidence to support an epistemic distinction about what justifies a listener's belief in each case. Since the basing relation is an epistemic notion, it's easy how to see how the two connect. Remembering that the distinction between taking a speaker's word for it and treating a speaker's

⁴⁹The assumption that the speaker's testimony is reliably produced is less subtle than the assumption that the speaker has justification for what she says is because there are various ways in which the speaker's testimony might be reliable. One way is by expressing a proposition for which she has justification but there are others, as Lackey (2008) observes. These other ways are the subject of Chapter 3.

testimony as evidence is supposed to determine the nature of the justification that supports the listener's belief, it would be a good thing if the distinction could be explained in epistemic terms. Putting the distinction in the terms of the basing relation does just this.

As observed in 1.3, transmission theories identify a notion of testimonial justification that is to be distinguished from justification from testimony. Testimonial justification is transmitted justification and happens when a listener takes a speaker's word for it. Justification from testimony isn't transmitted justification and happens when a listener either treats a speaker's testimony as evidence or relies on the speaker. Other theories typically make no such distinction. Lackey, for example, observes that it is 'standard practice' to 'use "testimonially based justification" and "testimonial justification" interchangeably' (Lackey, 2008, p. 9, n. 1).

Justification transmission is thus the notion at the core of transmission theories. The notion of taking a speaker's word for it is important, but it's important because it illustrates when justification transmission happens. Most important for understanding transmission theories is understanding what transmission is. I think that the best way of understanding justification transmission is through the metaphysical notion of *truthmakers*.⁵⁰

2.4.1 Truthmakers

According to truthmaker theory, for every true proposition, there is something in the world that the proposition is true in virtue of—something that makes it true. David Armstrong observes that '[t]he idea of a truthmaker for a particular truth, then, is just some existent portion of reality, in virtue of which that truth is true (Armstrong, 2004, p. 5). Here's Dean Zimmerman on the subject:

It is fairly natural to suppose that, whenever someone says something, and what they said was *true*, then there must be something "in the world"—some real object, thing, event, state of affairs, or fact—that "makes" what they said true. Philosophers have developed this idea by spelling out various "truthmaker principles." One plausible way to affirm the need for truthmakers would go like this: for every true proposition—where a "proposition" is the sort of thing that can be believed and doubted, the sort of thing that can be true or false—there must exist something that *requires* that the proposition

⁵⁰Other ways come from Burge (1993) and McDowell (1994b). Faulkner (2011) gives an overview of these theories. I'll leave the accounts from Burge and McDowell respectively aside here, since both are set against heavy background epistemological commitments and I am seeking the most theory-neutral account of transmission.

be true—in other words, a thing that could not possibly exist, unless the proposition in question is true Zimmerman (2008, p. 217).

Zimmerman ultimately doubts whether or not truthmaker theory is true for *every* proposition. Nonetheless, one might think that it's true of every claim to a justified belief. Given the notion of a truthmaker, we can understand competing theories of justification as different accounts of the truthmakers for propositions of the form 'S has justification for *p*'. The framework provided by truthmaker theory yields an account of justification transmission. Using the vocabulary of truthmaker theory, justification transmission can be expressed in the following:

- (3) The truthmakers for the proposition *the speaker has justification for what she says* become truthmakers for the proposition *the listener has justification for what the speaker says*.

Importantly, (3) makes no claim about the nature of a speaker's justification. It also makes no reference to what the truthmakers for the proposition *the speaker has justification for what she says* might be a matter of—it merely says that whatever these are, they're also truthmakers for the proposition *the listener has justification for what the speaker says*.

Transmission theories can thus be combined with any theory of the nature of justification in general. Since transmission theories hold that the nature of testimonial justification just is the speaker's justification, it seems that they're correspondingly silent about the nature of a listener's testimonial justification. One might thus think that transmission theories aren't theories of the nature of testimonial justification at all, since they don't give a precise account of testimonial justification. In other words, since nothing in the basic idea of transmission definitively states *what* is transmitted from speaker to listener, transmission theories aren't theories of the nature of testimonial justification.

It's true that the basic idea behind transmission theories doesn't give a definitive account of the nature of testimonial justification. But it's a mistake to go from this thought to the thought that transmission theories *aren't* theories of testimonial justification. There are two reasons for this. The first is that transmission theories *are* saying something distinctive. Neither internalist theorists nor defenders of reliability theories think there's any important sense in which a listener can pick up a speaker's justification for what she says. The second is that, whilst the basic idea behind transmission theories doesn't specifically identify the nature of testimonial justification, neither does the basic idea behind internalist theories given in (TI), nor the basic idea behind reliability theories given in (TR). So transmission theories are no less theories of the nature of justification from testimony than other theories.

Transmission theories can be combined with either an internalist or externalist account of, say, perceptual justification, or justification from testimony more generally. On the subject of testimonial justification, however, they're heavily externalist. A listener might not know whether or not a speaker's testimony expresses knowledge.⁵¹ It therefore cannot be obvious *what* the speaker's justification is a matter of. This means that the listener can (according to transmission theories) acquire justification that she is unaware of. So transmission theories are externalist about the nature of testimonial justification.

Another important feature of transmission theories is that the listener's acquired testimonial justification can't outstrip a speaker's justification for what she says. According to transmission theories, there's a sense in which the acquisition of justification matches the acquisition of some material goods. Suppose that you acquire a collection of ancient Roman coins from me. If I have sixty-eight ancient Roman coins, it follows that you can't acquire more than sixty-eight ancient Roman coins from me. It doesn't, however, follow you can't acquire more ancient Roman coins from someone else, nor does it follow that you can't ultimately have more than sixty-eight ancient Roman coins—if you already had some yourself, then the coins you acquire from me might supplement your own collection.⁵² The point is that you can't acquire more ancient Roman coins *from me* than I had when you acquired them. If I have *no* ancient Roman coins, you therefore can't acquire any from me.⁵³

Transmission theorists think that testimonial justification is similar. If a speaker lacks justification for what she says, then a listener can't acquire testimonial justification from her. The listener's resultant justification might outstrip the speaker's but if so, then this is because the listener has some other justification. Even if a speaker does successfully transmit justification to the listener, the listener's justification can outstrip the speaker's but where it does, the listener's justification isn't exclusively testimonial justification.

The analogy between acquiring ancient Roman coins and justification transmission is far from perfect. There are various differences. The first is that, if you acquire my collection of ancient Roman coins, then I no longer have them (excluding any complicated joint ownership). Transmission theories don't think

⁵¹Cf. McDowell (1994b).

⁵²This will be particularly important in 3.3

⁵³Lackey compares testimonial justification, as transmission theories conceive of it as similar to a bucket brigade, stating that 'the picture we have of testimony [according to transmission theories] seems to be much like a bucket brigade: in order to give you a full bucket of water, I must have a full bucket of water to pass to you. Moreover, if I give you a full bucket of water, then—spills aside—the bucket of water you now possess as a result of our exchange will also be full. Similarly, in order to transmit to you a warranted belief, I must have a warranted belief to pass to you. Moreover, if I transmit to you a warranted belief, then—defeaters aside—the belief that you now possess as a result of our exchange will also be warranted' (Lackey, 2008, p. 47).

that this is true of testimonial justification—a speaker transmitting her justification to a listener doesn't thereby give up her own justification. Rather, the speaker shares her justification with a listener and both fully possess the speaker's justification.⁵⁴

Another limitation of the analogy comes out in the way that a collection of ancient Roman coins can be divided—if I have sixty-eight ancient Roman coins, then you could acquire some of these without acquiring all of them. Acquiring ancient Roman coins isn't an *all or nothing* matter. Transmitted justification, on the other hand, is.⁵⁵

Whilst the analogy between the transmission of justification and the acquisition of ancient Roman coins is far from perfect, it illustrates an important consequence of transmission theories—the fact that they hold that a listener's acquired testimonial justification cannot outstrip a speaker's justification for what she says. This point is crucial to the discussion in Chapter 3, where I discuss several objections to transmission theories.

Since this point is so important, it's worth saying a little bit more. Transmission theories needn't claim that for any ordered *chain* of testimony consisting of the speakers $\{S_1, S_2 \dots S_n\}$ that the justification acquired by S_n can't outstrip the justification transmitted from S_1 to S_2 . To see this, recall that transmission theories didn't have to claim that S_2 's justification couldn't outstrip S_1 's justification. Transmission theories can allow that S_2 might acquire transmitted justification from S_1 and then supplement this using her own background beliefs, to ultimately have justification that outstrips S_1 's justification. S_2 might then transmit all of this to S_3 , resulting in S_3 's justification outstripping S_1 's. All of this is compatible with the basic idea behind transmission theories.

The following kind of case illustrates this: Suppose that I believe that $(p \wedge q)$ and I tell you that $(p \wedge q)$. Whilst I know that p and have justification for p , my belief that q is merely a guess. I have no justification for q but sincerely believe it. You take my word for it that $(p \wedge q)$. According to transmission theories, you thus acquire justification for p but not for q through my justification being transmitted to you. Suppose, however, that before I told you that $(p \wedge q)$ you already had justification for q but had no previous justification for p . My telling you that $(p \wedge q)$ thus means you come to know that $(p \wedge q)$ partly by acquiring my justification and partly because of your antecedent justification for q . Lastly, suppose that you

⁵⁴In this way, the idea of both parties taking co-ownership of a collection of ancient Roman coins might offer a more precise analogy. The corresponding idea in terms of testimonial justification is that speaker and listener come to jointly possess the justification, rather than the justification being possessed individually by several people.

⁵⁵This also highlights a disanalogy between transmitted justification and a bucket brigade. Where a bucket of water might be partly spilled in the process of passing the water from individual to individual, transmitted justification is either transmitted or is not, rather than partly lost.

later tell your friend that $(p \wedge q)$. Your testimony thus transmits your justification for $(p \wedge q)$ to your friend. In each link of the testimonial chain, the testimonial justification acquired is just the immediate speaker's justification for what she says, but your friend is in a position to acquire justification for $(p \wedge q)$ that I lack.

In a testimonial chain, the available testimonial justification can go down as well as up. Suppose that I believe that $(p \wedge q)$ and I have justification for both conjuncts. You take my word for it that $(p \wedge q)$, but later find out that q is false, so you no longer have justification for q and no longer believe that $(p \wedge q)$. Nonetheless, you later tell your friend that $(p \wedge q)$. According to transmission theories, the testimonial justification your friend acquires is less than the testimonial justification you acquired from me. My testimony made testimonial justification for $(p \wedge q)$ available, whereas your testimony merely makes testimonial justification for p available.

Transmission theories thus allow that the acquisition of testimonial justification along a testimonial chain can increase or decrease. They deny, however, that testimonial justification can increase or decrease across a single link. The testimonial justification that any listener in a testimonial chain can acquire can't outstrip the justification the immediate speaker has for what she says, even though the testimonial justification made available by *different* speakers in a single testimonial chain might be either greater or lesser than the testimonial justification made available by earlier speakers.

2.4.2 Interpersonal Theories

One objection to the account of transmission in terms of truthmakers that I've given is that it doesn't adequately account for recent *interpersonal* theories of testimony. Interpersonal theories (at least sometimes) appear to be versions of transmission theories, but one might object that the account of transmission in terms of truthmakers doesn't respect this. I don't think that interpersonal theories of testimony present a problem for the truthmaker account of transmission so in this section, I'll explain why this is.

Interpersonal theories begin with the thought that, when a speaker tells a listener something, she does so with the intention that the listener takes her word for it. Moran expresses this as the idea that a speaker presents an *assurance* to a listener. In Moran's words 'when someone tells me it's cold out, I don't simply gain an awareness of his beliefs; I am also given his assurance that it's cold out' (Moran, 2005, p. 6).

Hinchman, in a similar spirit, says that telling someone presents her with an *invitation to trust*. The idea for Hinchman is that telling involves the presentation of an invitation to trust and if this is refused without good reason, the speaker

might naturally feel slighted by this. Hinchman states that:

[I]f [listener] A doesn't regard himself as having an entitlement to believe that it's noon on the basis of [speaker] S's invitation he quite explicitly (however silently) turns the invitation down: he refuses to trust her. And that is the explanation of S's sense of having been slighted: she has tendered an invitation to A to trust her and explicitly been rebuffed (Hinchman, 2005, p. 265).

The idea is that these interpersonal characteristics, whether understood as an assurance or an invitation to trust, are epistemically significant. Moran states that the speaker's assurance gives a listener with a reason for believing the speaker's testimony (Moran, 2005, p. 4). And Hinchman's notion of an entitlement is an epistemic notion. So it seems as though interpersonal theorists think that something supports the listener's belief that doesn't support the speaker's belief. The speaker's belief isn't supported by her own presented assurance/invitation to trust. This means that there's a truthmaker for the proposition that *the listener has justification for what the speaker says* that isn't a truthmaker for the proposition that *the speaker has justification for what she says*. So interpersonal theories, it seems, can't be transmission theories.

Closer inspection of interpersonal theories reveals why they aren't incompatible with transmission. As Lackey observes, the idea that a mere fact about a speaker's telling a listener something provides her with some sort of justifying reason is open to obvious objections. For one thing, it seems as though a speaker might lie in telling a listener something. And if the presentation of an assurance/invitation to trust is a necessary condition of telling a listener something, then the assurance/invitation to trust is present even when the speaker is lying. But if such an assurance/invitation to trust is present even when the speaker lies, it's hard to see how it can have any epistemic significance (Lackey, 2008, pp. 225-226).

Mindful of Lackey's objection, both Hinchman and Moran hold that the mere presentation of an assurance *by itself* isn't epistemically significant. Hinchman holds that a speaker's presented invitation to trust puts the listener in a position to form a justified belief in the speaker's testimony only if the speaker is in fact in a position to meet the commitments associated with the act of telling (Hinchman, 2005, pp. 578-579).⁵⁶ And Moran claims that:

[A]s with any public assumption of responsibility, the appropriate abilities and other background conditions must be assumed to be in place for it to amount to anything. For the speaker to be able to do

⁵⁶This is similar to Hinchman's discussion of trust in 2.2.1.

this it must be assumed by both parties that the speaker does indeed satisfy the right conditions for such an act (e.g., that he possesses the relevant knowledge, trustworthiness, and reliability) (Moran, 2005, p. 16).

Both Hinchman and Moran thus deny that there's any justification that comes *simply* from the presented assurance/invitation to trust. For Hinchman, the justification that is identified with an invitation to trust comes from the speaker's own knowledge (and thus the speaker's justification for what she says). This makes an interpersonal theory compatible with transmission. Rather than being an alternative with the truthmaker account of transmission, interpersonal theories are theories of how transmission takes place.

Interpersonal theories offer a distinctive account of how transmission happens. The idea, in Hinchman's terminology, is that the presentation and accepting of an invitation to trust serves to connect the listener's belief to the speaker's justification for what she says. Of course, if it's the case that there's no *sui generis* justification from the invitation to trust that doesn't come from the speaker's justification for what she says, then it's hard to see how the distinctively interpersonal features of the conversation are epistemically significant (Lackey, 2008, p. 237). But the idea is that the interpersonal factors feature in an explanation of how the truthmakers for the proposition *the speaker has justification for what she says* come to be truthmakers for the proposition *the listener has justification for what the speaker says*.

2.5 Summary: Transmission

Transmission theories claim that testimony can allow a listener to inherit a speaker's justification for what she says. This makes them distinctive. This basic idea is compatible with the idea that testimony can induce justified beliefs in listeners in different ways, so transmission theories thus invoke a distinction between *testimonial justification* and *justification from testimony*. This requires an account of when testimony transmits justification and when it doesn't. In order to supply such an account, transmission theories identify conversational distinctions between taking a speaker's word for it, relying on a speaker and treating a speaker's testimony as evidence. Testimonial justification is the justification acquired by taking a speaker's word for it and justification from testimony is what otherwise justifies a listener's belief.

Transmission theories offer a natural way of thinking about testimonial justification. This can be brought out in considering a case in which I tell you that *p* and then later hear that *p* from my friend. Intuitively, if my friend only believes

that p because you told her so, then my justification for p isn't enhanced by my friend's testimony.⁵⁷ By contrast, if my friend's justification for p is independent of mine, then her testimony might enhance my overall justification.⁵⁸ This is easily explained by transmission theories in terms of my justification being passed from me to you to my friend and back to me in the first case and in the second case, by my friend's independent justification being passed to me.

⁵⁷ Adam Elga (2010) makes a similar observation about the significance of finding that someone disagrees with you. According to Elga, in a situation where you find out that members of a group always end up agreeing with one another, finding out that one of the group disagrees with you might give you significant cause to adjust your confidence in your belief. Even if it does, however, finding out that another member of the same group disagrees with you doesn't give you further cause to adjust your confidence in your belief, where it would have if the individuals formed their beliefs independently of one another. Elga asserts that this point 'is completely uncontroversial, and every sensible view on disagreement should accommodate it' (Elga, 2010, p. 178). This is connected to Thomas Kelly's claim that, in cases of disagreement, 'numbers mean little in the absence of independence' (Kelly, 2010, p. 148). It's also borne out in Condorcet's jury theorem (Dietrich and Spiekermann, 2013, p. 660).

⁵⁸ Though there is some controversy about exactly what "independent" is supposed to amount to. See Franz Dietrich and Kai Spiekermann (2013). Cf. Lackey (2013).

Chapter 3

In Defence of Transmission

3.1 Introduction

In the last chapter, I gave a basic account of the idea of testimonial justification as justification transmission, according to which it involves a listener acquiring a speaker's justification for what she says. Transmission theories have come under heavy fire recently, with various examples purporting to show that understanding testimonial justification in terms of transmission has consequences that are so counterintuitive that we ought to abandon the idea of transmission.

In this chapter, I mount a defence of transmission theories. I discuss the various counterexamples and argue that transmission theories can deal with each of them. In doing so, the nature of transmission theories comes into sharper focus. I suggest that the arguments against transmission theories ultimately fail because they mistake exactly what transmission theories are committed to. Transmission theories can say all the correct intuitive things about the would-be counterexamples. Or so I argue.

3.2 Schoolteacher Cases

3.2.1 The Case Against Transmission

In 2.4.1, I observed that a listener's acquired testimonial justification cannot outstrip a speaker's justification for what she says (according to transmission theories). Lackey seeks to express this as follows:

- (4) For every speaker, A, and hearer, B, B knows (believes with justification/warrant) that p on the basis of A's testimony that p only if A knows (believes with justification/warrant) that p .

With this in mind, we can consider cases of the following type:

SCHOOLTEACHER: Suppose Mr. Jones, a devout creationist, teaches second grade at an elementary school that requires all teachers to include a section on evolutionary history. He is required to keep his personal views to himself. He develops a reliable set of notes on evolutionary theory, and even acquires a sophisticated understanding of fossils and the fossil record from reading *The Origin of Species* and from videotaped lecture courses from Richard Dawkins and Stephen Jay Gould. He “accepts” the theory for the purposes of teaching his students, fulfilling his duty to the school board, and earning his paycheck. One day on a field trip, weeks before they learn about evolutionary biology, he discovers a fossil. Mr. Jones rightly deduces that the fossil is of a creature now long extinct, and tells his students that the extinct creature once lived right where they are, millions of years ago (Graham, 2006a, p. 112).⁵⁹

The following claims are intuitively true in SCHOOLTEACHER:

- (5) The class can come to acquire knowledge from the teacher’s testimony.
- (6) The teacher’s testimony doesn’t express knowledge.

Taken together, however, (5) and (6) jointly imply:

- (7) (4) is false.

And since (4) is supposed to be a consequence of transmission theories, transmission theories are thus shown to be false by *modus tollens*.

In its stated form, however, the argument against transmission theories rests on a mistake. (4) is a statement about the *entire* class of justification that one might acquire from testimony. In 2.3, however, I explained that transmission theories do not seek to explain the entire class of justification from testimony in terms of transmission. Rather, they seek to explain a distinctive class of justification that can come from testimony in terms of transmission. As such, the following is an accurate account of what transmission theories are committed to:

- (4a) For every speaker, A, and hearer, B, B *testimonially* knows (believes with *testimonial* justification/warrant) that *p* only if A knows (believes with justification/warrant) that *p*.

⁵⁹Another example of this is the CREATIONIST TEACHER case from Lackey. Since I think that Graham’s case is more powerful than Lackey’s, I will focus on Graham’s here.

The argument from SCHOOLTEACHER can thus be reformulated in the following terms:

(5a) The class can acquire testimonial knowledge from the teacher's testimony.

(6a) The teacher's testimony does not express knowledge.

And (5a) and (6a) jointly imply:

(7a) (4a) is false.

We therefore get a modus tollens argument against transmission theories from the falsity of (4a). Unlike the argument concerning (4), transmission theories cannot agree with the verdict of the modified argument.⁶⁰

3.2.2 Transmission and Schoolteacher Cases

The argument from (5a) to (7a) appeals to *knowledge*. The discussion of transmission in Chapter 2 appealed to justification. Lackey asserts that this shift is unproblematic for the argument against transmission, stating that the argument applies 'equally to justification and warrant as well [as knowledge]' (Lackey, 2008, p. 49, n. 26). Lackey's claim notwithstanding, the strategy for resisting the argument from the SCHOOLTEACHER case that I will pursue argues that there is a difference between justification and knowledge that is important here.

The important difference between knowledge and justification is that, whilst knowing requires belief, having justification does not. If one knows that p , then one believes that p .⁶¹

Propositional justification can be most easily illustrated by considering a case in which you see that p , but for some reason you don't come to believe that p . It seems that if you later came to believe that p on the basis of having seen that p , then your belief would be justified. Before you do, however, your justification for p is merely propositional. If you come to form the relevant belief, then propositional justification can become doxastic justification.

The distinction isn't simply that doxastic justification concerns things you believe and proposition justification concerns things you do not. You can have propositional justification for something you believe. Suppose two people (A

⁶⁰This kind of *modus tollens* argument against transmission theories illustrates the common structure of the arguments here.

⁶¹Whether or not we want to use belief in the analysis of knowledge is a separate question. See Williamson (2000). This isn't true of justification; it doesn't follow from the fact that one has justification for p that one believes that p . There is a difference between *doxastic justification*, which supports beliefs and *propositional justification*, which does not. One can therefore have justification for something one doesn't believe.

and B) tell you that p and whilst you are unconvinced by A's testimony, B's testimony brings you to believe that p . (Suppose also that both A's testimony and B's testimony meet whatever the requirements for supplying justification are). In this situation, since your belief is based on B's testimony, rather than A's, your belief that p is doxastically justified by its relation to B's testimony and propositionally justified by its relation to A's. Like the previous case, involving you seeing that p , if your belief came to be based on A's testimony, then it's relation to A's testimony would justify your belief.

Again, what matters is the epistemic basing relation. For a source of justification for p to supply doxastic justification for your belief that p , your belief must be based on that source. If you don't believe that p based on some source of justification, but are in a position to base your belief on that source, then that source provides you with propositional justification. Since, like the schoolteacher, one can be in possession of a justification for a belief, even if one doesn't believe it, having justification doesn't imply believing.

Something similar (though importantly, non-identical) is true of knowledge. One can distinguish between knowing that p and being in a position to know that p . The idea is that knowing is an analogue of having doxastic justification and being in a position to know is an analogue of propositional justification. Importantly, however, where propositional justification is a way of being justified, being in a position to know something isn't a way of knowing it. This difference is important, because it opens up a strategy for explaining the argument against transmission theories in terms of justification that isn't available in terms of knowledge.

The distinction between doxastic and propositional justification supports a strategy for resisting the argument from the SCHOOLTEACHER case. Transmission theories might suggest that whilst the teacher lacks knowledge and doxastic justification, he has (undefeated) propositional justification for what he says. With this in mind, transmission theories can hold that the listener's acquired justification is the speaker's propositional justification. Justification therefore doesn't get generated, or created from nowhere. Rather, the speaker's propositional justification is passed onto the listener. This is compatible with Lackey's TEP-N, which is properly stated as (4a).⁶²

One might object to this strategy on the grounds that there is something incorrect with the idea of propositional justification belonging to someone, since an essential feature of propositional justification is that the individual *declines* to

⁶²Since the strategy here rests on differences between knowledge and justification, no such strategy is available in terms of testimonial knowledge. Since I set out transmission in 2.4.1 in terms of justification, this doesn't matter. For related discussions concerning knowledge, see Fricker (2006a), Hintikka (1962) and Welbourne (1986). For an alternative account of how knowledge and justification differ with respect to testimony, see Audi (1995; 2006; 2004).

base her belief on the justification. This gathers more force when we see that, intuitively, someone who *has* justification for her belief but doesn't base her belief on it is intuitively no better off than someone who lacks justification altogether. If I see various bits of good evidence that my wife is having an affair, but ignore these and then base my belief on a fortune-teller's testimony, my belief gets no epistemic support from the fact that I encountered the good evidence exactly because I didn't base my belief on it.

This might bring someone to think that an appeal to someone having propositional justification is illicit. And unless this claim can be defended, the strategy for resisting the argument from the SCHOOLTEACHER case fails. Fortunately, however, I think that the argument can be resisted.

Even if we observe that the belief of someone who believes that p with merely propositional justification is no better off than that of someone who believes that p with no justification, we can still appreciate a difference between the believers. One is in a position to form a justified belief, if she would only base her belief properly. The other is not. To say that someone has propositional justification is therefore just to say that she is in a position to form a justified belief by basing her belief properly.⁶³

I therefore think that we should characterise the SCHOOLTEACHER case in terms of the transmission of propositional justification. Faulkner, when discussing a related case, Lackey's CREATIONIST TEACHER case, outlines a similar strategy, in terms of knowledge (or doxastic justification) skipping links in a testimonial chain (Faulkner, 2011, p. 73). This strategy cannot be applied here, however.

The is because the SCHOOLTEACHER case isn't an instance of doxastic justification skipping links in a testimonial chain. Unlike Lackey's CREATIONIST TEACHER case, in which a teacher with creationist beliefs tells her class about evolution because she believes that the scientific evidence best supports such a theory (Lackey, 2008, p. 48). Where it is plausible to think that doxastic justification skips a link in the CREATIONIST TEACHER case, by moving from the scientific community to the students but skipping the teacher, no such explanation is available in the SCHOOLTEACHER case. As Graham observes:

There is no previous knowledge that p preserved in the chain of communication. Someone relying on testimony can learn that p from a speaker who says that p even though no-one at all in the chain of communication knows that p (Graham, 2006a, p. 113).

This vindicates the earlier claim that the SCHOOLTEACHER case presents a more

⁶³Faulkner (2006) gives an account of propositional justification and its involvement in the transmission of knowledge.

pressing problem for transmission theories than Lackey's CREATIONIST TEACHER case. The CREATIONIST TEACHER case can be characterised in terms of justification skipping links in a testimonial chain, where SCHOOLTEACHER cannot. Faulkner's conception of knowledge skipping links in a testimonial chain accounts for CREATIONIST TEACHER (the case Faulkner explicitly directs it against) but not SCHOOLTEACHER.

All of this shows that transmission theories should be sensitive to the distinction between knowledge transmission and justification transmission. In the same way that knowing involves more than having justification, successfully transmitting knowledge requires more than successfully transmitting justification. As observed in 2.4.1, justification transmission is at the heart of transmission theories. The distinction between doxastic and propositional justification can explain how knowledge, in some cases, may skip links in a testimonial chain. But it also explains how the acquisition of testimonial justification can generate new knowledge by bringing a listener to know something not known by anyone in the testimonial chain by a listener taking a speaker's word for what she says.

3.3 Transmission and Safety

Another type of counterexample trades on the notion of *safety*. Safety, in this sense, is a property of beliefs to do with how easily the person might have believed something false. An individual's belief is safer insofar as the nearest possible world in which the individual forms a false belief *from the same evidential base* is further away.⁶⁴ The idea is that safety is (at least partly) what marks out knowledge from mere true belief.

Suppose an individual is facing a pillar and it appears to her as though there is a pillar in front of her. She consequently forms the true belief that there is a pillar in front of her. Unbeknownst to her, however, between her and the pillar before her there is a mirror which is in fact reflecting another pillar. What she sees is thus a reflection of the other pillar, though she takes herself to be seeing a pillar in front of her (Snowdon, 1980-1981, p. 181). The way that the individual's belief was formed means it might easily have been false—the reflection would have caused her to believe that there was a pillar in front of her even if there hadn't been one behind the mirror (Pritchard, 2012b, pp. 6-7). This supports the intuitive verdict that she doesn't know that there is a pillar in front of her.

Of course, one way to respond to this type of challenge is to claim that safety is a separate matter from knowledge and justification. Strong *virtue epistemology*

⁶⁴Throughout this thesis I will be using a possible worlds semantics to model counterfactuals and other modal statements. This follows the orthodoxy in discussions of the modal dimensions of epistemology. See Pritchard (2012a), Sosa (2007; 2009).

theories hold that safety isn't necessary for knowledge.⁶⁵ And even though many think that transmission theories of testimonial justification are incompatible with strong virtue epistemology, the same is true of some defenders of transmission theories.⁶⁶ Nonetheless, transmission theories can be motivated using intuitions about truth-conduciveness, as I observed in ???. Since safety is also a matter of truth-conduciveness, it might seem natural to think that safety is somehow connected to justification.⁶⁷ Even if one takes this route, however, and argues that justification and safety are connected, I think that transmission theories can respond to problems grounded in aligning safety and justification.

In this spirit, suppose we align justification and safety. Combining this with the statement of transmission given in (3) yields the following consequence of transmission:

- (8) For every speaker, A, and hearer, B, where B takes A's word for it that p , B's belief that p and A's epistemic position with respect to p are alike in terms of safety.

Falsifying (8) thus falsifies transmission theories. Sanford Goldberg (2005) describes a case designed to do exactly this. Goldberg's case is as follows:

WRITER: Frank is a writer with a strange habit. Every morning, at precisely 7:30 a.m., he wakes up and dumps out whatever is left of the pint of milk he purchased the day before, but places the empty carton back in the fridge until noon. Then, throughout the interval from 7:30 to noon, he always remains in the kitchen, as that is where he writes every morning like clockwork. Finally, at exactly noon, he takes the now-empty milk carton out of the fridge and throws it away—an act which to him symbolizes the end of his day's writing. Now Mary is unaware of Frank's milkdumping practice. One morning, having spent the prior evening at Frank's house with Frank and her son Sonny, she awakens at 7:40 and goes to the kitchen with Sonny. Upon entering (Frank is already there) she immediately goes to the fridge for a glass of OJ, and as she reaches for the OJ she casually observes a small carton of milk. She goes on to tell Sonny (who always has cereal with milk for breakfast) that there is milk in the fridge. As luck would have it, there is indeed milk in the carton on this day (Frank failed to remember that he had bought milk yester-

⁶⁵See Sosa (2007; 2009).

⁶⁶Lackey (2007) and Pritchard (2012a) argue against strong virtue epistemology theories using intuitions about justified beliefs based on testimony. Faulkner (2011) expressly denies that safety is a necessary condition on either knowing or being justified whilst defending a transmission theory.

⁶⁷In Pritchard's (2012a) terminology, this makes for an *anti-luck* theory.

day). When Frank observes Mary's testimony, he realizes that he forgot to dump the milk; when Sonny observes her testimony, he forms the belief that there is milk in the fridge (Goldberg, 2005, p. 302).

The following claims are supposed to be intuitively true of WRITER:

- (9) In WRITER, the listener takes the speaker's word for it.
- (10) In WRITER, the listener's belief is safe where the speaker's belief is not.

Of course, this implies that:

- (11) (8) is false.

And again, since (8) is a consequence of transmission theories, there is a *modus tollens* argument against transmission theories.

The idea is that the listener's belief is rendered safe by the writer's presence. If the speaker had spoken falsely, the writer would have corrected her, preventing the listener from forming the false belief. The listener thus wouldn't easily have falsely believed that there was milk in the fridge. By contrast, the writer's presence and disposition to intervene doesn't affect the speaker's belief—the writer only intervenes when the speaker comes to tell the listener about the contents of the fridge. Nothing therefore renders the speaker's belief safe—she might easily have falsely believed that there was milk in the fridge since the writer might easily have left an empty milk carton in the fridge.

Since the listener takes the speaker's word for it, it would seem that the justification acquired is distinctively testimonial. The distinction in between taking a speaker's word for it and treating a speaker's testimony as evidence was set out in 2.2.3. The result is that the epistemic difference between the listener's belief and the speaker's belief cannot be explained in terms of the listener failing to take the speaker's word for it.

Charlie Pelling (2013) offers a similar case:

TERRITORIAL FARMER: Farmer Fred is highly territorial. He worries continually that Randy may be trespassing on his land. Fred hears a rustle in the bushes. In his agitated state of mind, he jumps straight to the conclusion that it was Randy who made the rustle. On that basis, Fred shouts 'Randy, you're trespassing on my land'. Although the rustle might easily have been made by something else (there are many wild animals in the area), it so happens that Randy did make the rustle and he is indeed trespassing on Fred's land. On hearing Fred's words, Randy comes to believe that he is trespassing on Fred's land (Pelling, 2013, p. 213).

In *TERRITORIAL FARMER*, the central intuitions are supposed to be the same as those exploited in *WRITER*:

- (12) In *TERRITORIAL FARMER*, the listener takes the speaker's word for it.
 (13) In *TERRITORIAL FARMER*, the listener's belief is safe where the speaker's belief is not.

And again, this implies:

- (14) (8) is false.

TERRITORIAL FARMER thus represents a similar problem to *WRITER* for transmission theories.

Pelling's *TERRITORIAL FARMER* differs from Goldberg's *WRITER* in two important respects, however. The first is that, in *TERRITORIAL FARMER*, the source of the safety isn't outside the conversation. The safety of the listener's belief comes exclusively from facts about the speaker and the listener.

The second is that the speaker in *TERRITORIAL FARMER* lacks any justification for what he says. Where the speaker in *WRITER* might have some justification for thinking that there is milk in the fridge—she did look in the fridge and see a milk carton and one might think that this is usually an indication that there is milk in the fridge—it is less clear that the speaker in *TERRITORIAL FARMER* has any justification, since his belief is merely the result of paranoia. The acquisition of justification in *WRITER* involves the listener's acquired justification (conceived in terms of safety) outstripping the justification that the speaker has, where the acquisition in *TERRITORIAL FARMER* involves the generation of justification from scratch. Importantly, Pelling suggests that any theory must allow that the listener's belief in *TERRITORIAL FARMER* is genuinely testimonial. This is because the listener's belief is not formed by reflecting on his background beliefs for thinking what Fred says is true—Randy believes that he is on Fred's land because Fred said so (Pelling, 2013, p. 215). It thus seems that the epistemic status of Randy's belief must be relevant to testimonial justification.

Both *WRITER* and *TERRITORIAL FARMER* involve a listener taking a speaker's word for it but forming a belief with a different justificatory status to the speaker's belief. They thus constitute a challenge to transmission theories.

3.4 Safety and Testimonial Justification

As with the schoolteacher cases, I think that transmission theories of testimonial justification can offer an adequate account of both *WRITER* and *TERRITORIAL FARMER*. Like the schoolteacher cases, what the cases highlight is interesting ways

in which a transmission theory of testimonial justification needs to be extended to make a theory covering the nature of all justification from testimony.

3.4.1 Goldberg's Writer

Goldberg's WRITER case appears to be a serious problem for transmission theories. Both (9) and (10) seem hard to deny and indeed I don't think that transmission theories should try to deny either of them. Rather, they should explain why (9) and (10) both being true isn't incompatible with thinking of testimonial justification in terms of transmission. And I think that this can be done.

In 3.2.1, we observed the importance of dealing in *testimonial justification*—the justification that a listener gets *by taking a speaker's word for it*. This was because, in 2.3, I explained that transmission theories should hold that there are a variety of ways of forming a justified belief in what a speaker says, one of which involves the speaker's justification being transmitted to the listener. Hence, getting at the heart of what transmission theories are about involves dealing with a case in which the only justification that supports the listener's belief is justification that she gets by taking the speaker's word for it.

The listener's belief is safe where the speaker's isn't. There is reason to think that the source of this safety is the writer. Goldberg accepts as much and it can be brought out intuitively by considering an analogue of the situation in which the writer is not present—the speaker simply looks in the fridge and then tells the listener that there is milk in the fridge. In this situation, (10) is highly unintuitive. It doesn't seem that, in a similar situation where the writer is absent, it seems that the listener's belief is exactly as safe as the speaker's. And this obviously provides no challenge to (4a).

I think that we can get from the thought that, if the writer hadn't been in the room, the situation would have provided no threat to transmission theories to the thought that the fact that the writer does render the listener's belief safer than the speaker's, without too much difficulty. From the fact that the writer is the source of the additional safety, it follows that the additional safety isn't something that the listener picks up *by taking the speaker's word for it*. Rather, it is something that the listener gets *from being in the same room as the writer*.

This means that the additional safety that the listener gets from being in the same room as the writer is nothing to do with what transmission theorists identify as testimonial justification. The claim in (4a) is explicitly to do with the listener's *testimonial* justification, which is the justification the listener acquires by taking the speaker's word for it. (4a) says nothing at all about what *other* justification might support the listener's belief when she takes a speaker's word for it. The result is that the fact that WRITER shows that a listener's justification can outstrip

a speaker's just comes from the fact that a listener might take a speaker's word for it whilst being in the same room as someone else.

A listener's belief being supported by testimonial justification is completely compatible with it being supported by justification from other sources as well. This is what happens in Goldberg's WRITER case. But the fact that justification can come from other sources doesn't show that transmission theories are false. For the WRITER case to be a counterexample to (4a) it would need to be the case that the listener acquired justification *by taking the speaker's word for it* that outstripped the speaker's justification for what she says.

3.4.2 Pelling's Farmer

In Pelling's TERRITORIAL FARMER, there is no intervener. I think that this makes things simpler. The source of the epistemic difference in TERRITORIAL FARMER comes from the listener's knowledge that it is he that is making the noise. As a result, the argument against transmission theories faces a problem. The problem is that the listener must be taking the speaker's word for it, but at the same time, the listener's background information must come to bear on his belief.

Unless the listener's belief is formed through taking the speaker's word for it, the case is irrelevant to the claim at the centre of transmission theories. Crucially, Pelling states that 'we can suppose [in TERRITORIAL FARMER] that no background knowledge of Randy's plays any essential role: he simply hears Fred's assertion and accepts its content in the usual way' (Pelling, 2013, p. 215). As such, the case is relevant to transmission theories, but it isn't so clear that the listener's belief can be supported by his own background reasons.

Where a listener takes a speaker's word for it, as observed in 2.2.3, the listener's belief isn't based on any background evidence. In TERRITORIAL FARMER, it seems that what makes the difference between Randy's belief and Fred's belief has to be some fact about Randy. It cannot be that Fred's testimony is reliably produced, since Fred's paranoia would have led him to think Randy was on his land even if he was not. What makes Randy's belief safe is Randy's awareness that it is *he* who was trespassing on Fred's land, rather than someone else.

If Randy takes Fred's word for it, however, then Randy's belief isn't based on the factors that render it safe because of what it is to take someone's word for something. Insofar as it is intuitive that Randy's belief is *necessarily* based on the factors that render it safe, it is simply the case that Randy cannot form a belief by taking Fred's word for it. It was observed in 2.2.3 that there might be cases in which a listener is simply unable to take a speaker's word for something. If Randy's belief cannot be separated from his background evidence, then this is just one such case. The result is that the TERRITORIAL FARMER case doesn't make

trouble for transmission theories, since it is hard to see how both (12) and (13) can be maintained simultaneously.

3.5 Undefeated Defeaters

Even if the above cases are ultimately unproblematic for transmission theories, Lackey offers further counterexample. Like the above cases, they appeal to intuitions about how a listener's belief in a speaker's testimony is justified even though the speaker lacks justification for what she says. The cases feature speakers whose justification for what they say is *defeated* by counterconsiderations. These present a distinctive challenge to transmission theories.

These cases feature relevant undefeated defeaters. It is therefore worth saying something briefly about what a relevant undefeated defeater is. Defeaters are factors that prevent someone's belief being justified even when it is properly based on something that can justify it.⁶⁸ Consider a case in which I see that there is an ink bottle in front of me. Everything goes well and I believe that there is an ink bottle in front of me until someone discusses the possibility that someone has replaced the ink bottle with a vial of poison *and provides a plausible account of why this should be the case*.⁶⁹ In such a situation, it is intuitive that I am no longer justified in believing that there is an ink bottle in front of me.

Specifically, I am not justified because my justification is defeated. My belief is based on the fact that I am seeing an ink bottle, but because of the raised possibility that the bottle might have been replaced, my belief fails to be justified. This illustrates the basic point that defeaters prevent beliefs that are based in what would ordinarily be a justifying factor from being justified.

Using the notion of defeaters, Lackey sets out a number of counterexamples to transmission theories. The idea in each is that the speaker lacks justification for what she says, because some relevant defeater prevents her belief being justified, but nonetheless the listener's corresponding belief comes to be supported by distinctively testimonial justification. This is problematic for transmission theories since they deny the possibility of such cases.

The first of these cases is as follows:

PERSISTENT BELIEVER: Millicent in fact possesses her normal visual powers, but she has cogent reasons to believe that these powers are temporarily deranged. She is the subject of a neurosurgeon's experiments, and the surgeon falsely tells her that some implants are caus-

⁶⁸See Fumerton (1995), Moser (1989), Pollock and Cruz (1999) for discussions of defeaters.

⁶⁹See Unger (1975). Pritchard (2012b) illustrates the importance of someone *motivating* the possibility of the ink bottle having been replaced, rather than the possibility being one that is merely *raised*, as sceptical possibilities are.

ing malfunction in her visual cortex. While she is persuaded that her present visual appearances are an entirely unreliable guide to reality, she continues to place credence in her visual appearances. She ignores her well-supported belief in the incapacitation of her visual faculty; she persists in believing, on the basis of her visual experiences, that a chair is before her, that the neurosurgeon is smiling, and so on. These beliefs are all, in fact, true and they are formed by the usual, quite reliable, perceptual processes. As Millicent is walking out of the neurosurgeon's office, she is the only person to see a badger in Big Bear Field. On the basis of this visual experience, she forms the corresponding true belief that there was a badger in this field, and then later reports this fact to her friend Bradley without communicating the neurosurgeon's testimony to him. Bradley, who has ample reason to trust Millicent from their past interaction as friends, forms the corresponding true belief solely on the basis of her testimony (Lackey, 2008, p. 59).

The argument against transmission theories from PERSISTENT BELIEVER goes as follows:

- (15) In PERSISTENT BELIEVER, the speaker's justification for what she says is defeated.
- (16) In PERSISTENT BELIEVER, the listener's justification for what she says is not defeated.
- (17) In PERSISTENT BELIEVER, the listener takes the speaker's word for it.

It follows from (15) and (16) that:

- (18) In PERSISTENT BELIEVER, the listener's belief is justified where the speaker's belief is not.

And adding this to (17) yields:

- (19) (4a) is false.

Claims (15) and (16) make PERSISTENT BELIEVER distinctive. In support of (15), Lackey states that 'the fact that [the speaker] believes the neurosurgeon that her visual powers are an entirely unreliable guide to reality, without holding any other relevant beliefs, provides her with an undefeated *psychological* defeater for her visual beliefs' (Lackey, 2008, p. 60 (emphasis added)). The defeater is a

psychological defeater because the source of the defeat is something that the individual believes.⁷⁰

In support of (16), Lackey states that ‘not only does [the listener] have excellent positive reasons for accepting [the speaker’s] testimony, he does not believe, nor does he have any reason to believe, that [the speaker’s] visual powers are an unreliable guide to reality’ (Lackey, 2008, p. 60). This observation requires caution, however. The moral of 3.4 was that the listener’s positive reasons are relevant only if the listener is not taking the speaker’s word for it. Nonetheless, I think that transmission theories should find it intuitive that the listener in PERSISTENT BELIEVER can form a justified belief in the speaker’s testimony even without the positive reasons Lackey identifies. The result is that PERSISTENT BELIEVER can be made into an argument against transmission theories.

The final case of this type is the following:

SERIOUS STUDENT: While sitting on the lawn reading Descartes’ Meditations [...] Bartholomew finds himself in the grips of skeptical worries that are so strong that he can scarcely be said to know anything at all. [...] Audrey, a friend and fellow student at the university he attends, approaches Bartholomew, asks him where the nearest Starbucks is, and he reports that it is around the corner—which he believes from having seen it there himself—but does not report his skeptical worries to her. Audrey has never considered any skeptical possibilities at all, and hence does not have any relevant defeaters for her ordinary beliefs. Moreover, she does have positive reasons for accepting Bartholomew’s report, e.g., she has perceived a general conformity between his reports and the corresponding facts, she has inductive evidence for believing that speakers are generally reliable when they are giving directions, and so on. Given this, Audrey forms the true belief that there is a Starbucks around the corner solely on the basis of Bartholomew’s testimony about his first-hand perceptual experience (Lackey, 2008, p. 61).

Analogous claims to those above are supposed to be true of SERIOUS STUDENT:

- (20) In SERIOUS STUDENT, the listener forms a justified belief.
- (21) In SERIOUS STUDENT, the speaker’s belief is not justified.

⁷⁰Indeed, Lackey formulates a similar case in terms of *normative* defeat, which comes from things the individual *ought* to believe but in fact does not. This case is called DOGMATIC BELIEVER (Lackey, 2008, pp. 63-64). Since nothing in my account of how transmission theories should deal with these cases turns on the difference between psychological defeat and normative defeat, I will focus on PERSISTENT BELIEVER.

(22) In SERIOUS STUDENT, the listener takes the speaker's word for it.

And these imply the rejection of transmission in the following:

(23) (4a) is false.

In support of (20) and (21), the case exploits the idea that certain factors can be relevant to one epistemic subject but not another. This case exploits the idea that some factors can be relevant to one epistemic subject but not another. The idea is that the speaker's justification is defeated because of factors that are not relevant to the listener. The listener thus forms a justified belief by taking a speaker's word for it where the speaker lacks justification for what she says. The general idea behind this case as well as the two previous cases is that, intuitively, the effect of defeaters fails to be transmitted along with justification through testimony (Lackey, 2008, p. 64). Whilst the defeaters might mean the speaker lacks justification, they do not defeat the listener's justification.

More specifically, the reason that (20) and (21) are both true is because of *epistemic contexts*. The idea is that, since the speaker is reading the *Meditations* and thinking about philosophy, he's in an epistemic context in which these kinds of doubts are relevant. The fact that he cannot assuage these doubts makes his belief unjustified. Since the listener is not in such an epistemic context, these doubts aren't relevant to her belief and therefore don't prevent her belief being justified.⁷¹ A shift in epistemic contexts thus supports (20) and (21).

These cases present arguably the clearest and most pressing objection to transmission theories. Nonetheless, I think that transmission theories can give a principled and acceptable account of all of these cases. Whilst they provide a stronger challenge than any of the previous cases, they ultimately do not yield a reason to reject transmission theories.

3.6 Justification Transmission and Epistemic Defeat

In response to the argument appealing to PERSISTENT BELIEVER, I think that transmission theories should argue that (17) and (18) cannot both be true. The argument against (4a) depends on both (17) and (18). Showing that they can't both be true thus removes the argument against transmission.

To see why PERSISTENT BELIEVER doesn't make a problem for transmission theories, it's important to recall the observation in 2.3 that sometimes we respond to a speaker's testimony by taking her word for it and sometimes we rely on the speaker. This was independently motivated by the thought that there are ways

⁷¹For more on different epistemic contexts, see Blome-Tillmann (2009), Cohen (1998; 2000) DeRose (2009), Hawthorne (2004) and Lewis (1996).

that we respond to testimony in ways that we don't respond to the deliverances of instruments. This distinction showed that the essential claim that transmission theories make is that, when a listener takes a speaker's word for it (but only when the listener takes the speaker's word for it), the speaker's justification can be transmitted to a listener. It must either be the case that the listener takes the speaker's word for it in *PERSISTENT BELIEVER*, or that the listener merely relies on the speaker. Whichever way the listener responds, I think that there is no problem for transmission theories.

Suppose the listener takes the speaker's word for it. Obviously, this preserves (17). It's not so obvious, however, that the listener's belief is justified. Lackey's thought is that the listener can form a justified belief in the speaker's testimony because the speaker's testimony is reliably produced. When we distinguish between relying on a speaker and taking a speaker's word for it, we can see why the fact that the speaker's testimony is reliably produced doesn't make it intuitive that the listener forms a justified belief by taking a speaker's word for it. If the listener takes the speaker's word for it, this connects her belief to the speaker's (whatever that amounts to) for what she says. In *PERSISTENT BELIEVER*, the speaker has no such justification, so there's reason to think that the listener's belief isn't justified, if she forms her belief by taking a speaker's word for it. If we stipulate (17), there's reason to think that (18) is false.

Suppose, then, that we stipulate (18) instead of (17). This means that the listener relies on the speaker's testimony rather than takes the speaker's word for it. And this reliance connects the listener's belief to the reliability of the speaker's testimony and the fact that the speaker's testimony is reliably produced gives a reason to think that the listener's belief is justified. The trouble with stipulating (18), however, is that we can't maintain (17) alongside it. Transmission theories don't think that justification is transmitted unless the claim expressed in (17), that the listener takes the speaker's word for it, is true. But maintaining (18) requires the listener merely relying on the speaker, contrary to (17). This means that the *PERSISTENT BELIEVER* case doesn't make an argument against transmission.

There's reason to think that we can't simply stipulate both (17) and (18). If the reason that a listener's belief is supported by the reliability of the speaker's testimony is because the listener's reliance involves an assumption of reliability, then the listener's taking the speaker's word for it manifests an assumption that the speaker has justification for what she says. The result is that in response to the testimony in *PERSISTENT BELIEVER*, the listener either takes the speaker's word for it and forms an unjustified belief, or relies on the speaker but forms a justified belief in a way that transmission theories can make sense of.

Rather than offering a counterexample to transmission theories, *PERSISTENT*

BELIEVER illustrates what transmission theories should be committed to. Transmission theories should allow that relying on a speaker yields a justification that is explained in terms of reliability. But whilst PERSISTENT BELIEVER illustrates that this is something that transmission theories should make sense of, there's an independent motivation for thinking that they can do so. This came from 2.3.

3.7 Transmission and Contextualism

The above strategy gives an account of PERSISTENT BELIEVER and DOGMATIC BELIEVER. Furthermore, I think that the above strategy will *necessarily* undermine any counterexample grounded in either an understanding of justification in terms of either inference or reliability. This still leaves SERIOUS STUDENT as a counterexample. Insofar as SERIOUS STUDENT follows a similar pattern to the other two examples, there is the availability of a common characterisation, involving characterising the listener's justification as instrumental rather than testimonial. Nonetheless, I think that the situation in SERIOUS STUDENT fails to trouble transmission theories for other reasons. I think transmission theories can give an account of SERIOUS STUDENT according to which the acquired justification is transmitted from the speaker.

According to Lackey, SERIOUS STUDENT shows that 'a testifier in one context may be able to impart knowledge (justified belief/warrant) that she cannot properly attribute to herself to a hearer in another context because, relative to such contexts, they are held to different epistemic standards' (Lackey, 2008, p. 62). There is thus an appeal to the *contextualist* claim that all attributions of knowledge or justification are made within a certain context—a set of standards according to which the truth of the claim can be evaluated. The idea is that a speaker in a demanding epistemic context, where the requirements for a belief being justified are high, can fail to be justified in believing something but nonetheless be a source of testimonial justification to a listener in a less demanding epistemic context, where the standards for justification are relatively low.

I think that transmission theories should deny that both (20) and (21) are simultaneously true. Specifically, I think that they should argue that maintaining both (20) and (21) are true involves a manipulation of the epistemic contexts—exactly the kind of manipulation that contextualist theorists think is illicit. Once we stop this, there is no case against transmission theories.

Contextualists think (or at least used to think) that epistemic contexts helped sort out a sceptical paradox. Here are three epistemological claims:

(24) I know that I have two hands.

- (25) I do not know that I am not a brain in a vat.
- (26) If know that I have two hands, then I know that I am not a brain in a vat.

Intuitively, each of these claims is true. They are, however, jointly inconsistent. Contextualists think that they can sort this out by explaining why the apparent inconsistency is in fact an illusion. According to contextualists, the reason that the conjunction of (24), (25) and (26) appear to be in conflict is because we manipulate the standards required for knowledge in considering the claims individually. The idea is that the standards for knowledge required for (24) are reasonably low, but in (25) the standards for knowledge are relatively high. As Cohen observes:

In everyday contexts, the standard is such that our mundane knowledge ascriptions can be true. This explains our confidence in the truth of our everyday knowledge ascriptions. When confronted with sceptical arguments however, the chance of error becomes salient and we can be lead to shift our standards (Cohen, 2000, p. 102).

Importantly, the sceptical paradox comes out as an illusion on the contextualist story because there is no single context in which both (24) and (25) are both true.

One might think that the same is true of *SERIOUS STUDENT*. There is no single context in which (20) and (21) are both true. According to the more demanding epistemic context in which the sceptical doubts that concern the speaker are relevant, *neither* the speaker *nor* the listener's belief is justified. According to the less demanding context, in which the sceptical doubts are not relevant, both the speaker and the listener are justified.

This means that *SERIOUS STUDENT* can be understood in terms of transmission. The speaker's justification is transmitted to the listener and as a result either both the speaker and the listener are both justified, or neither of them is, depending on whether or not the justification that is transmitted is sufficient to render their beliefs justified given the epistemic context. Maintaining both (24) and (25) depends on there being a shift in the epistemic context. So does *SERIOUS STUDENT*.

Even if such epistemic context shifting can be legitimated, there is still no intuition that the listener's belief is justified by anything the speaker's belief is not. One might still insist that the same set of factors supports both the speaker's belief and the listener's belief. This is just an expression of justification transmission. The difference in the justificatory status of the two beliefs is explained in terms of those factors being sufficient for justified belief in one context, but

not in the other. This doesn't show that justification transmission is problematic. Rather, it shows that factors such as context can mean that a speaker can transmit justification to a listener and one might be justified where the other is not. But this is just what one would expect given that the possibility of epistemic contexts differing can determine whether or not a particular set of justificatory factors does on balance justify a belief.

3.8 Consistent Lies

Lackey's attack on transmission theories also features one further type of case. I have saved this until the end because it draws together some of the threads from the previous two chapters. The final case is the following:

CONSISTENT LIAR: When Bertha was a teenager, she suffered a head injury while ice skating and, shortly afterwards, became quite prone to telling lies, especially about her perceptual experiences involving wild animals. After observing this behavior, her parents became increasingly distressed and, after consulting various psychologists and therapists, finally took her to see a neurosurgeon, Dr Jones. Upon examining her, Dr Jones noticed a lesion in Bertha's brain which appeared to be the cause of her behavior, and so it was decided that surgery would be the best option to pursue. Unfortunately, Dr Jones discovered during the surgery that he couldn't repair the lesion—instead, he decided to modify her current lesion and create another one so that her pattern of lying would be extremely consistent and would combine in a very precise way with a pattern of consistent perceptual unreliability. Not only did Dr Jones keep the procedure that he performed on Bertha completely to himself, he also did this with the best of intentions, wanting his patient to function as a healthy, happy, and well respected citizen.

As a result of this procedure, Bertha is now—as a young adult—a radically unreliable, yet highly consistent, believer with respect to her perceptual experiences about wild animals. For instance, nearly every time she sees a deer, she believes that it is a horse; nearly every time she sees a giraffe, she believes that it is an elephant; nearly every time she sees an owl, she believes that it is a hawk, and so on. At the same time, however, Bertha is also a radically insincere, yet highly consistent, testifier of this information. For instance, nearly every time she sees a deer and believes that it is a horse, she insincerely reports to others that she saw a deer; nearly every time she

sees a giraffe and believes that it is an elephant, she insincerely reports to others that she saw a giraffe, and so on. Moreover, because of her consistency as both a believer and a liar, those around her do not have any reason for doubting Bertha's reliability as a source of information. Indeed, in her home community, she is regarded as one of the most trustworthy people to consult on a wide range of topics. Yesterday, Bertha ran into her next door neighbor, Henry, and insincerely though correctly reported to him that she saw a deer on a nearby hiking trail. Since, in addition to his trust in Bertha, it is not at all unlikely for there to be deer on the hiking trail in question, Henry readily accepted her testimony (Lackey, 2008, pp. 53-54).

Whilst the situation is complicated, the basic idea is straightforward. A speaker systematically believes that p when p is false and also systematically lies about it, so she says that $\neg p$. Her incompetence (in her tendency to form beliefs) and her insincerity (in lying) thus combine in such a way that she reliably says true things, albeit because of unusual circumstances. The CONSISTENT LIAR case thus yields the following argument:

- (27) In CONSISTENT LIAR, the speaker lacks justification for what she says.
 (28) A listener could form a justified belief from the speaker's testimony in CONSISTENT LIAR by taking the speaker's word for it.

Which in turn yields the claim that:

- (29) (4a) is false.

We thus get a similar *modus tollens* argument against transmission theories, motivated differently.

CONSISTENT LIAR is a particularly important case because it shows that believing lies can yield justified beliefs. This has the added bonus of blocking responses to the SCHOOLTEACHER case from 3.2.1 that hold that the fact that the speaker says something she doesn't believe necessarily makes her testimony unreliable. Audi takes this approach, observing that:

Even if the theory *itself* is (an item of) "knowledge" (as one might say if it is known by someone), he isn't a reliable link in the chain from the fossil record through the theory, since he neither knows the theory nor even believes it, hence does not believe it on the kind of ground that would protect him from error in the way the (truth-conducive) grounding of knowledge does. By his lights, in fact, he is *deceiving the children*—a point important in itself for the epistemology of testimony. Moreover, it appears that he would have been as

likely to state a false proposition if the school required his teaching a mistaken theory that seemed to him no more pernicious than this one. Such a person might well be teaching a false theory or one that is not well evidenced and just happens to be correct (Audi, 2006, p. 29).

CONSISTENT LIAR illustrates why this approach doesn't work. It's *exactly because* Bertha is saying something that she doesn't believe that she *is* a reliable testifier. Considering CONSISTENT LIAR thus shows why a type of response to the SCHOOLTEACHER case fails.

Furthermore, the response to the SCHOOLTEACHER case in 3.2.2 cannot be a response to the CONSISTENT LIAR case. There are two reasons for this. The first is that there's reason to doubt that the speaker in CONSISTENT LIAR has propositional justification for what she says—it seems more appropriate to say that any justification from her perceptual faculties is defeated. The second, however, reveals something more interesting about the transmission of justification.

Even if we could make sense of the speaker in CONSISTENT LIAR having propositional justification for what she says, I still don't think that this would allow an explanation of CONSISTENT LIAR in terms of transmission. Taking the speaker's word for it in CONSISTENT LIAR wouldn't connect the listener up to the speaker's justification for what she says. This is because the speaker doesn't say what she says *because* she has justification for it. Rather, she says it because she seeks to deceive.

In the SCHOOLTEACHER case, the teacher says what he does *because* of the evidence that he recognises in support of what he says. The schoolteacher's testimony thus connects his audience to his propositional justification. The speaker in CONSISTENT LIAR's doesn't say what she does because of her justification and thus doesn't connect the listener to her justification. For the listener's belief to be causally connected to the speaker's justification it must be that the speaker says something because she has justification for it and the listener forms her belief because of the speaker's testimony. Since this is true with SCHOOLTEACHER, but not CONSISTENT LIAR the former can involve transmission where the latter can't.

This is in line with thinking about the epistemic basing relation. General thinking about the epistemic basing relation is that it is *some kind* of causal relation.⁷² As such, it seems natural to think that the speaker's testimony connects the listener to her justification only if the speaker's justification causes the speaker's testimony. In lying, the reason that the speaker said that p rather than that $\neg p$ was because of her compulsion to lie rather than the fact that she has

⁷²“Some kind” excludes deviant causal chains. See Turri (2011a).

justification for p , so justification can't be transmitted through lying. Again, this is something that CONSISTENT LIAR shows us about transmission theories that the PERSISTENT BELIEVER and SCHOOLTEACHER case do not.

3.9 Lies and Testimonial Justification

In virtue of the similarities between CONSISTENT LIAR and PERSISTENT BELIEVER, I think that transmission theories should give a similar account of the two cases. This involves denying (28). Since transmission theories are sensitive to distinctions in ways of responding to a speaker's testimony, they need not accept that the falsity of (28) shows that the speaker's testimony cannot be a source of justification at all. Rather, as observed in 3.6, transmission theories should hold that relying on the speaker's testimony can yield a justified belief.

Faulkner makes a similar observation, stating that:

Certainly it is true that one could acquire knowledge [or justified belief] from Bertha's testimony. One could treat Bertha as a thermometer and justify believing what she says on the basis of the reliability of her saying. This is the reductive model of testimonial knowledge and the view that testimony transmits knowledge and warrant is consistent with this model in that it is consistent with our being able to learn inductively from testimony (Faulkner, 2011, p. 71).

This last phrase is crucial. I am not proposing that relying on a speaker yields inductive justification. Rather, I am proposing that the listener's belief is justified by the reliability of the speaker's testimony—along the lines of the theory described by Sosa in 1.1. Faulkner's notion of relying on the speaker here is the same as the notion of treating the speaker's testimony as evidence in 1.3.

Implicit in Faulkner's discussion is the idea that we rely on others because of (and therefore based on) our reasons for thinking that they will (in the case of testimony) tell the truth, rather than a presumption that they will do so. As a result, our reliance is justified by our evidence of the speaker's reliability. The theory I'm advancing here is that Faulkner's correct to think that the listener's justification doesn't come from taking the speaker's word for it, but incorrect to think that the listener's justification depends on her inferring the truth of the speaker's testimony from the fact she said it.

Understanding the justification relying can yield exclusively in terms of a listener's reasons for thinking that the speaker's testimony is true is that it doesn't quite capture the intuition that Lackey is trying to push using the CONSISTENT LIAR case. Lackey observes that:

[E]ven though Bertha is a radically *unreliable believer* with respect to her animal sightings, she is nonetheless an extremely *reliable testifier* of this information—indeed, even more reliable than many average testifiers who frequently exaggerate, distort, or are simply wrong in their reports about what is true [...] Thus, it is clear that Bertha’s *statements*, unlike her *beliefs*, are an excellent epistemic source of information about wild animals (Lackey, 2008, p. 55).

The intuition that Lackey is looking for in (28) is thus more properly that the listener can form a justified belief on the basis of the speaker’s testimony *because the speaker is a reliable testifier*. Faulkner’s theory allows that one might form a justified belief on the basis of Bertha’s testimony, but this belief wouldn’t be justified because Bertha is a reliable testifier. Rather, it would be justified because the listener had evidence of this. Understanding justification from relying as coming from the reliability of the process rather than from the listener’s own reasons properly accommodates the intuition that Lackey is seeking to promote. And for the reasons given in 3.6, I think that there are independent theoretical reasons for transmission theories to want to accommodate this intuition.

My proposed strategy for understanding CONSISTENT LIAR involves denying (28). The strategy is not to deny that the listener can form a justified belief by believing the speaker’s testimony. Rather it is to deny that the listener can form a justified belief by *taking a speaker’s word for it*. This accommodates the intuition that the reliability of the speaker’s testimony can justify a belief and there is a theoretical reason why taking a speaker’s word for it doesn’t yield a justified belief from 3.6, because this involves a presumption about the speaker’s justification rather than merely about her reliability, which is absent in the CONSISTENT LIAR case.

3.10 Summary: Transmission Theories

I’ve suggested that considering the purported counterexamples to transmission theories shows three important things about transmission theories. The first was that there are differences between knowledge transmission and justification transmission. Specifically, knowledge transmission presupposes justification transmission and there are cases that can be explained in terms of justification transmission (specifically, propositional justification transmission) that cannot be explained in terms of knowledge transmission.

The second was that transmission theories should allow that a listener’s belief can be justified by the reliability of the process through which it was formed. Transmission theories should allow this because there is an independent reason

for thinking that taking a speaker's word for it is different to merely relying on the speaker and this account of the justification that each yields can be sustained by transmission theories in virtue of their externalist character.

Finally, a necessary condition of the speaker's justification being transmitted to the listener is the speaker's testimony having the correct causal connection to her justification. Where the speaker says something but not because she has justification for it, this doesn't make her justification available to the listener. In such a situation, the listener might rely on the speaker and thereby form a belief supported by the reliability of the speaker's testimony, or she might treat the speaker's testimony as evidence and thereby form a belief supported by her reasons for thinking that the speaker's testimony is true.

Each of these claims can, I think, be individually motivated independently of the counterexamples given above and collectively these claims allow transmission theories to deal with the central examples to transmission theories.

Chapter 4

Internalist Theories

4.1 Introduction

Not all testimony comes from knowledgeable speakers seeking to share what they know. Some comes from people who are incompetent, or seeking to deceive us, or just not interested in our epistemic standings at all, such as those trying to persuade us either that something is the case, or to do something.⁷³ This means that we should be careful in believing testimony. And this motivates the reductionist theory described in 1.4. According to the paradigmatic reductionist theory, if a listener's belief in a speaker's testimony isn't based on her reasons for thinking that what the speaker says is true, then her belief isn't justified. This is because the paradigmatic reductionist theory holds that justification is a matter of these reasons. Internalists think this too. In explaining justification from testimony in terms of a listener's reasons, internalist theories offer a distinctive alternative to transmission theories.

In this chapter, I discuss internalist theories of justification from testimony. I set out the basic idea behind internalist theories of justification in general and consider how to apply this to testimony. In doing so, I set out three different types of internalist theory of justification from testimony. Along the way, I consider some of the intuitive motivations and limitations concerning internalist theories both generally and the theories of testimony that I identify.

⁷³Faulkner (2011) argues that most instances of testimony are like this.

4.2 Internalism and Justification in General

Before turning to testimony, it's worth getting the basic idea behind internalist theories of justification in general in view. One of the motivations given in 1.4 for dividing theories of testimony along the lines of the internalist/externalist debate, rather than in the vocabulary of reductionism and anti-reductionism was that the former is a more natural distinction and there's more agreement about what it amounts to. It's thus easier to start with the basic idea about what internalist theories of justification in general and then apply this to testimony. As I observed in 1.2, internalism about justification in general is encapsulated in the following:

- (I) An individual's justification for her belief that p is exclusively a matter of her reasons for thinking that p is true.

Obviously, exactly what (I) amounts to depends on what an individual's reasons amount to. According to *accessibilist* theories, the facts that are internal to an individual are exactly those that are *reflectively accessible* to her. Internal factors are those factors available to a subject seeking to undertake a Cartesian-style assessment of her own beliefs, identifying those for which she has some grounds for believing and those for which she doesn't.⁷⁴ As observed in 1.2, the idea is that you think about what it is that you would give if someone asked you how you know that p and what you come up with is your justification for p .⁷⁵ Roderick Chisholm articulates internalism in such terms, expressed in the statement that:

The internalist assumes that, merely by reflecting upon his own conscious state, he can formulate a set of epistemic principles that will enable him to find out, with respect to any possible belief that he has, whether he is justified in having that belief (Chisholm, 1988, pp. 285-286).⁷⁶

Accessibilist theories thus endorse the following:

- (AI) An individual's justification for p is exclusively a matter of facts that are reflectively accessible to her.

Obviously, the facts that accessibilist theories identify with justification are going to be mental facts about an individual. We can't find out facts about the world just by reflection.⁷⁷ It doesn't, however, follow from the fact that some fact X is a fact

⁷⁴See Descartes (1641).

⁷⁵Again, see Gerken (2012) and McKinnon (2012).

⁷⁶See also Chisholm (1989).

⁷⁷Denying this generates McKinsey's (1991) paradox.

about someone's mental life that X can justify her beliefs. If we think that certain facts about someone's mental life might constitutively depend on facts external to her, then this opens up the possibility of mental facts that aren't reflectively accessible.⁷⁸ If you can't tell by reflection facts that are external to you, then you can't tell by reflection facts about your mental life that are determined by facts external to you. So there might be mental facts that accessibilist theories don't allow as part of your justification.

This can also be established another way. The possibility of suppressed memories and desires also shows that there could be facts about your mental life that aren't reflectively accessible to you and thus not part of your justification, at least according to accessibilist theories. Assuming you suppress certain memories properly, you can't recall them just by reflecting. Nonetheless, they're still part of your mental life (albeit a suppressed part) and are therefore mental facts that accessibilists think don't count as part of your justification.

This yields an alternative account of which factors count as internal. According to *mental-state internalism* or *mentalism*, your justification is everything about your mental life, whether or not it's reflectively accessible to you. Mentalist theories are characterised by the following:

- (MI) An individual's justification is a matter of all and only those facts that are about her mental life.

Both accessibilism and mentalism are *evidentialist* theories of justification. They hold that justification is a matter of evidence and thus seek to explain what your evidence is. According to mentalist theories, you have evidence that p if and only if some fact about your mental life is evidence of p . According to accessibilist theories, you have evidence p just in case some fact about your mental life that you have reflective access to is evidence that p .⁷⁹

The differences between accessibilism and mentalism mean that each is motivated differently. Since both endorse (I), both are concerned with the establishing the claim that if some factor isn't internal to an individual, then it's not part of her justification. The fact that each takes (I) to be true in a different way, though, means that motivations for one theory don't automatically motivate the other. I'm going to focus on accessibilist theories. This is because the traditional motivations for internalism motivate accessibilism, rather than mentalism. Michael Bergmann (2006) makes this objection to mentalism. There's

⁷⁸This just means that the exact nature of your mental states is determined by facts external to you. Kripke (1972) and Putnam (1973) describe such theories of mental content.

⁷⁹This distinction between accessibilism and mentalism suffices for the purposes of this thesis, but one can take an even more fine-grained approach to individuating internalist theories. See John Turri (2009).

also another reason for leaving mentalism aside that's distinctive to the discussion here. A mentalist theory of justification from testimony can be given, but it's not so clear that it amounts to anything other than transmission by another name.

One might combine a mentalist theory of justification from testimony with a theory of mental content according to which the content of an individual's mental state constitutively depends on facts about the external world.⁸⁰ The resulting theory would thus hold that a listener's justification is a matter of facts about her mental life, but these are sensitive to considerations such as the speaker's epistemic status.⁸¹

This kind of mentalist theory *just is* a particular account of how justification transmission happens, though. According to this theory, a speaker's testimony that p puts a listener in a particular mental state with respect to p , the exact nature of which depends on the speaker's justificatory status with respect to p and this mental state is the listener's testimonial justification.⁸² So with this version of mentalism, we just get transmission by another name.

Accessibilism, on the other hand, does yield a distinctive theory of justification from testimony. Since it may not be reflectively accessible to the listener what the speaker's justification consists in (or even whether or not the speaker has any justification for what she says) and there may well be facts that are reflectively accessible to the listener that are not to do with the speaker, accessibilist theories aren't transmission theories.⁸³ I'll consider the application of accessibilism (hereafter 'internalism' unless otherwise stated) to testimony in 4.4. Before that, however, it's worth considering the traditional intuitive support for internalist theories of justification in general.

4.3 Justification and Clairvoyance

The basic idea behind internalism is that an individual's justification consists exclusively in the factors that are reflectively accessible to her, as expressed in (AI). Internalist theories thus have the following consequence:

- (30) An individual who has no reflectively accessible reasons for believing that p has no justification for p .

It might be tempting to think that (AI) and (30) are equivalent. This, however, is a mistake. Even though (30) follows from (AI), there might be good reasons for

⁸⁰See Kripke (1972) and Putnam (1973).

⁸¹See Williamson (2000).

⁸²Faulkner calls this the *same-state* explanation of transmission (Faulkner, 2011, p. 108).

⁸³Though cf. McDowell (1982; 1994b; 1995; 2002).

doubting that (AI) follows from (30). A theory of justification might hold that your justification for p doesn't consist in your reflectively accessible reasons for p but that such reasons are necessary for your belief that p being justified because they serve to put you in touch with the factors that your justification does consist in.⁸⁴ It's thus incorrect to claim that (AI) and (30) are equivalent. Insofar as they might come apart, (AI) is the constitutive claim of internalist theories, rather than (30). Nonetheless, a common argumentative strategy taken by internalists is to argue for (30) and then move from this to (AI).

In support of (30), consider the following case from BonJour (1985):

CLAIRVOYANT: Norman, under certain conditions that usually obtain, is a completely reliable clairvoyant with respect to certain kinds of subject matter. He possesses no evidence or reasons of any kind for or against the general possibility of such a cognitive power, or for or against the thesis that he possesses it. One day Norman comes to believe that the President is in New York City, though he has no evidence either for or against his belief. In fact the belief is true and results from his clairvoyant power, under circumstances in which it is completely reliable (BonJour, 1985, p. 41).

Internalist theories seek to use CLAIRVOYANT to establish (30). The internalist argument from the CLAIRVOYANT case goes as follows:

- (31) Suppose, for *reductio* that (30) is false.
- (32) It follows from (31) that Norman could be justified in his belief that the President is in New York City.
- (33) It is intuitive that Norman's belief that the President is in New York City can't be justified.
- (34) Therefore (30) must be true.

Now, I observed above that it's a mistake to think that (30) and (AI) are equivalent because one might endorse (30) without endorsing (AI). And the argument from (31) - (34) only establishes (30). One might seek to argue that maintaining

⁸⁴The most obvious examples of such a theory are the *dualist* theories of testimonial justification defended by Jennifer Lackey (2008) and Paul Faulkner (2011) respectively. Lackey and Faulkner reject both the paradigmatic reductionist theory's claim that justification from testimony is exclusively a matter of a listener's reasons and the paradigmatic anti-reductionist theory's claim that a listener's belief can be justified even if she lacks any reflectively accessible reasons for thinking the speaker's testimony is true. They thus seek to combine the claim that a listener's reflectively accessible reasons are necessary for her belief being justified with the claim that justification from testimony is not simply a matter of these reasons. Since the dualist theories are externalist, it is (I), rather than (30) that is constitutive of internalist theories.

(30) whilst denying (AI) is unprincipled, but that's a separate argument. Even if the move from (30) to (AI) is logically invalid, the fact that CLAIRVOYANT makes an intuitive case for (30) might still offer *some* support for internalist theories.

At the very least, (AI) provides a convenient explanation of (30). If an individual's justification is a matter of her reflectively accessible reasons, then, as observed above, this does imply that if she lacks such reasons, then she lacks justification. The fact that (AI) yields a convenient, principled and natural explanation of (30) might well count in its favour. In this way, the intuition that Norman's belief in CLAIRVOYANT can't be justified might provide some support for (AI).

One might think that the intended target of CLAIRVOYANT is specifically *reliability* theories, which hold that justification is a matter of the process by which the belief was formed being reliable. It's explicitly stated that the process by which Norman forms his belief *is* reliable and this marks the point of difference between reliability theories and competing theories of justification in general. Nonetheless, the clairvoyant case is intended as an objection to theories that deny (30) more generally. The focus on reliability targets a specific type of theory, but the point is supposed to work against externalist theories more generally.

BonJour states that:

[W]hy should the mere fact that a certain external relation obtains mean that Norman's belief is epistemically justification when the relation in question is entirely outside his ken? [...] One reason why externalism may seem initially plausible is that if the external relation genuinely obtains, then Norman will in fact not go wrong in accepting the belief, and it is, *in a sense* not an accident that this is so: it would not be an accident from the standpoint of our hypothetical external observer who knows all the relevant facts and laws. But how is this supposed to justify Norman's belief? From his subjective perspective, it *is* an accident that the belief is true. And the suggestion here is that the rationality or justifiability of Norman's belief should be judged from Norman's own perspective rather than one which is unavailable to him' (BonJour, 1985, pp. 42-44).

The observations about clairvoyance are supposed to cover any theory that denies (30). BonJour's suggestion is straightforward. Externalists think that some relation holding between an individual and the world is sufficient to justify her belief, whether or not she has any reflectively accessible reasons for thinking that her belief is true and/or the relevant relation actually holds. Where the relation actually holds but the individual is unaware of this, BonJour suggests that what matters is the individual's subjective perspective, rather than our objective per-

spective. Theories that deny (30) should disagree with Bonjour's verdict. And since nothing in the CLAIRVOYANT case that is reflectively accessible to Norman either establishes or indicates that the relevant relation holds, his belief is intuitively unjustified. Externalist theories are unable to return this intuitive verdict, but internalist theories are.

Keith Lehrer (2000) expresses a similar thought in what he calls the *opacity objection*. The opacity objection is motivated by considering cases (such as Norman the clairvoyant) where a subject forms a true belief as a result of a process that is, unbeknownst to him, reliable. Lehrer illustrates this using the example of Mr. Truetemp, who, unbeknownst to him, undergoes a surgical procedure that results in him being implanted with a device that causes him to reliably form true beliefs about the ambient temperature. The common internalist thought is that, the truth of his belief and the reliability of the process notwithstanding, Mr. Truetemp's belief about the ambient temperature isn't justified, exactly because he lacks reflectively accessible reasons for thinking that his belief is true.

Lehrer rightly notes that this doesn't amount to a decisive objection to reliability theories (let alone externalist theories), observing that 'it is possible to place some constraint on relationships or processes converting belief to knowledge to exclude production by the tempucomp [the device responsible for Mr. Truetemp's belief]' (Lehrer, 2000, p. 164). Nonetheless, Lehrer thinks that even if a reliability theory can exclude beliefs formed using tempucomps, there's still a problem, since Mr. Truetemp has no idea why he has the belief about the ambient temperature or why that belief is likely to be true. The reason is that '[i]t is more than the possession of correct information that is required for knowledge. One must have some way of knowing that the information is correct' (Lehrer, 2000, p. 164). This is where opacity enters the picture. The idea is that Mr. Truetemp lacks justification because certain facts are opaque to him. If the facts about how he formed his belief became available to him, then he would have justification. The example of Mr. Truetemp, which is explicitly directed at reliability theories, is thus supposed to generalise as an argument against externalist theories. As with the case of Norman, the motivation (30) doesn't automatically translate across to (AI), but one might think that there's enough affinity between (30) and (AI) to make a case for the latter.

4.4 Internalism and Testimony

That's the basic idea behind internalist theories of justification in general. We can now consider the application of internalist principles to testimony. In the same way that (AI) is constitutive of internalist theories in general, the following

is constitutive of internalist theories of testimony:

- (TI) A listener's justification for her belief based on a speaker's testimony is exclusively a matter of her reflectively accessible reasons for thinking that the speaker's testimony is true.

In the case of testimony, a listener's justification is a matter of the facts she can bring to bear in an argument that takes fact that a speaker said that p as an indication that p . Likewise, one can identify an analogue of (30) that concerns testimony as follows:

- (35) An individual who has no reflectively accessible reasons for thinking that the speaker's testimony is true has no justification for her belief in the speaker's testimony.

There are two ways of motivating (TI). Since (TI) follows from the more general (AI), motivating (AI) motivates (TI). Alternatively, however, one might establish (TI) independently of (AI). One might think that internalist intuitions about testimony are stronger than internalist intuitions about justification in general, or that there are distinctive facts concerning testimony that support (TI) but not (AI). Motivating (TI) in this way leaves us free to accept or reject (AI). So one can argue for (TI) in two ways: either by establishing (AI) and then arguing that there *isn't* anything epistemically distinctive about testimony, or by arguing that testimony *is* epistemically distinctive and this supports (TI).⁸⁵

One argument for (TI) exploits intuitions like those described in 4.3 in support of (AI). This appeals to the idea that we don't form justified beliefs by being *gullible*. Ordinarily, we think of gullibility as a bad thing, though exactly how we should characterise gullibility is controversial. According to one account, gullibility is simply the act of believing what somebody says without reasons for thinking that her testimony is true.⁸⁶ According to a second type of theory, gullibility is one of a multitude of ways of believing what someone says without supporting reasons.

As Faulkner observes 'whilst we judge gullibility negatively, we judge trust positively' (Faulkner, 2011, p. 116). Both accounts of gullibility can make sense of this. According to the first account, trust involves basing your belief in the speaker's testimony on your reasons for thinking that her testimony is true.⁸⁷ According to the second, trust and gullibility are different attitudes, both of which

⁸⁵Of course, one might deny (AI) with respect to other sources of justification, but endorse it specifically in the case of testimony. In this way, one might thus deny (AI) but endorse (TI).

⁸⁶This is from Fricker (1994). More accurately, it is believing what somebody says in a way that is not *based on* reasons for thinking that what she says is true.

⁸⁷I discussed Fricker's conception of trust in 2.2.1.

involve believing what speaker says without reasons for doing so, but one is a praiseworthy or morally defensible action, where the other is not.

In the same way that the argument appealing to Norman the clairvoyant sought to establish (30) and move from this to (AI), arguments from gullibility seek to establish (35) and move from this to (TI). Lackey offers the following case:

ALIEN: Sam, an average human being, is taking a walk through the forest one sunny morning and, in the distance, he sees someone drop a book. Although the individual's physical appearance enables Sam to identify her as an alien from another planet, he does not know anything about either this kind of alien or the planet from which she comes. Now, Sam eventually loses sight of the alien, but he is able to recover the book that she dropped. Upon opening it, he immediately notices that it appears to be written in English and looks like what we on Earth would call a diary. Moreover, after reading the first sentence of the book, Sam forms the corresponding belief that tigers have eaten some of the inhabitants of the author's planet during their exploration of Earth. It turns out that the book is a diary, the alien does communicate in English, and it is both true and reliably written in the diary that tigers have eaten some of the inhabitants of the planet in question. Moreover, Sam is not only a properly functioning recipient of testimony, he is also situated in an environment that is suitable for the reception of reliable reports (Lackey, 2008, pp. 168-169).

The idea is that Sam's belief isn't justified precisely because he lacks reasons for thinking that the diary report is true. He doesn't have any reasons for thinking that aliens have a practice of diary-keeping, as humans do, nor that they actually speak English, rather than a superficially similar language in which the words have completely different meanings and he therefore lacks any reason for thinking that. As observed in 4.3, Lackey doesn't think that ALIEN motivates an internalist theory of testimony. Rather, it motivates (35), which is an internalist *constraint* on justification from testimony.⁸⁸ The idea is that any viable theory of testimony should respect the fact that situations like ALIEN, where a listener lacks reasons for believing a speaker's testimony, don't involve a listener forming a justified belief.

⁸⁸Lackey thus disputes the move from (35) to (TI).

4.5 Varieties of Internalism

Internalist theories of testimony are thus related to internalist theories of justification in general. There are, however, various ways of spelling out (TI). Whilst all internalist theories of testimony take it that justification from testimony is a matter of a listener's reflectively accessible reasons, one can individuate internalist theories according to exactly which set of reasons they identify with the nature of justification from testimony.⁸⁹ This section offers a taxonomy of internalist theories that divides theories into three camps, before discussing the intuitive strengths and limitations of each.

4.5.1 Direct Internalism

According to one type of internalist theory, the correct way to spell out (TI) is in terms of the following:

- (DI) A listener's reflectively accessible reasons for thinking that a speaker's testimony is true are exclusively those reasons that she has for thinking that testimony is generally true.

I'm going to call this theory *direct internalism*. Internalist theories all think that justification from testimony is *inferential* in character. In the vocabulary of 2.2, internalist theories hold that a listener's belief in a speaker's testimony is justified only if the listener treats the speaker's testimony as evidence. Treating a speaker's testimony as evidence involves inferring the truth of what she says from the fact that she said it. The proposal here is to classify internalist theories according to the inferential route that they identify. Whilst there are various inferential routes available, direct internalism claims that justification comes by way of the following inference:

- (36) S said that p .
 (37) People generally say true things.

Therefore

- (38) p .

I call this theory direct internalism because it moves *directly* from the fact that the speaker said something to the conclusion that it's true. Direct internalist theories thus hold that a listener's justification comes from her grounds for thinking that testimony is generally true.

⁸⁹Another way to individuate such theories concerns claims about *how* the listener's reasons justify her belief in what the speaker says. Compare Fricker (1994) with Lehrer (2006).

Direct internalism has been attributed to David Hume (1777).⁹⁰ This is because of Hume's claim in his discussion of miracles that 'the evidence, derived from witnesses and human testimony, is founded on past experience' and that '[t]he reason, why we place any credit in witnesses and historians, is not derived from any connexion, which we perceive a priori, between testimony and reality, but because we are accustomed to find a conformity between them' (Hume, 1777, pp. 74-75). Nowadays, however, it's increasingly unpopular to attribute this theory to Hume.⁹¹ The main reason for disassociating the theory from Hume, however, is that it's textually a bad fit. Since the interest here is in whether or not the theory is defensible, rather than whether or not it's really *Hume's* theory, it's still worth considering carefully.

This is particularly clear because it's controversial whether or not the traditional arguments against direct internalism work. Traditionally, direct internalism has been unpopular for two reasons. The first is that we think that people who haven't established (37) generally *do* have justified beliefs based on testimony. The second is that it's unclear that anyone ever *could* establish (37). C.A.J. Coady (1992; 1994) makes both of these arguments.⁹² For simplicity, I'll focus on the first one here.⁹³

Direct internalism says that justification from testimony is a matter of reasons for (37). This means that a listener's belief is justified only if she has such reasons. Coady thinks this is problematic:

[I]t seems absurd to suggest that, individually, we have done anything like the amount of field-work that [this theory] requires. As mentioned earlier, many of us have never seen a baby born, nor have most of us examined the circulation of the blood nor the actual geography of the world nor any fair sample of the laws of the land, nor have we made the observations that lie behind our knowledge that the lights in the sky are heavenly bodies immensely distant nor a vast number of other observations that [direct internalism] would seem to require. Some people have of course made them for us but we are precluded from taking any solace from this fact under the present interpretation [of internalism] (Coady, 1992, pp. 82-83).

⁹⁰Fricker (1995) and Kusch and Lipton (2002) attribute this theory to Hume under the label *global reductionism*.

⁹¹See Faulkner (1998) Fogelin (2003) and Traiger (2010), who offer distinctive interpretations of Hume's epistemology of testimony.

⁹²So too does Thomas Reid (1764) and also Fricker (1995).

⁹³Shogenji (2006) argues against the second. A response to the first, which shows that we *do* have the kind of evidence direct internalism requires also answers the second since the fact that we actually have such evidence shows that we could have such evidence.

Coady is surely correct in thinking that it's a problem for a theory if it has the consequence that beliefs based on testimony are never justified. Recall the observation from 1.1 that nearly all of our beliefs depend in some way on testimony. It's thus a serious worry about direct internalism if these beliefs can't be justified.

Of course, one might try to circumvent the problem by suggesting that a listener need not establish (37) *by herself*, but can exploit the experiences of others in establishing that testimony is generally reliable. As Coady correctly notes, however, the way that an individual would most obviously come to do this is through testimony, but using testimony to establish (37) is problematically circular. If a listener is seeking to establish the reliability of testimony, then can't use the deliverances of testimony to do this (Coady, 1992, p. 81).⁹⁴

Coady thus thinks that our beliefs in testimony are justified more often than the direct internalist can allow. The trouble with this approach, however, is that it's controversial whether or not the prospects for a listener establishing (37) are as bleak as Coady thinks. Jack Lyons (1997) offers one line of argument against this idea. According to Lyons, *simulation theory* allows a listener a shortcut to establishing (37). Lyons states that:

According to the simulation theory [...] we form beliefs about the mental states of others by using the mechanisms by which we form the corresponding states in ourselves. We simply imagine ourselves in the other's position, and see what states are produced; that is, we take our own mental state production mechanisms 'offline', feed in the relevant perceptual and other inputs, and simply introspect the appropriate output (Lyons, 1997, p. 172).

The idea is thus that even if a listener's observations of people saying true things is insufficient by itself to establish (37), it can be enhanced by simulation theory to justify her belief in (37). In Lyons' words:

[It is necessary that] we have done some first hand report checking, but what simulation can do is to give us further evidence and expand on the inductive sample that [Coady's objection] insists is too small by giving us additional evidence for the Sincerity Principle [the claim that people are generally sincere testifiers] and the Competence Principle [the claim that people are generally competent testifiers]. The role of simulation is to provide the agent with a host of (justified) beliefs about single cases, from which the agent can then induce the appropriate generalizations (Lyons, 1997, p. 173).

⁹⁴This is a serious sceptical problem for direct internalism, if it finds its mark. See Huemer's (2001) 8-ball discussion.

Jonathan Adler (2002) also denies that listeners generally lack such evidence. Adler observes that:

[W]e have enormous evidence, from our earliest years, of reliable testimony in its basic role of conveying information—the weather, the time, directions, location of items, scores in games, schedules, names, phone numbers, and so on. Much of this information we are able to verify directly simply by acting on it (Adler, 2002, p. 148).

Furthermore, according to Adler:

[E]ven where testimony is not subject to any simple verification, there are powerful sources of indirect checking. Consider the vast amount of information students absorb from textbooks. They cannot verify most of this information, and even where they can, it is only through further testimony—teachers and other textbooks [...] However, since these will be extended passages, there is a demand of coherence that that provides a sharp check on sharp deviations from accuracy. Moreover, convergence with the testimony of other sources constitutes corroboration, to the extent that these sources are independent (Adler, 2002, p. 149).

Adler goes on to provide further arguments to the conclusion that, contrary to Coady's arguments, ordinary listeners in fact *do* have evidence for (37).

Lastly, Tomoji Shogenji (2006) offers another response based on indirect confirmation. Shogenji states that:

Fortunately for the [global] reductionist, there is an indirect way of confirming the general credibility of testimony [...] For example, given the report of a heavy rain, the truth of the credibility hypothesis C_{TES} makes it more likely that travelers arrive late, no baseball game is played, etc. In other words, when we obtain testimony and we regard it as credible (when we accept the hypothesis that the testimony is credible), we consider it more likely than otherwise that certain other propositions are true and some of those propositions can be confirmed by non-testimonial evidence (Shogenji, 2006, pp. 341-342).

The basic idea behind Shogenji's defence of direct internalism is that, generally, what people say has certain implications. Establishing (37) doesn't always require going out and checking that *the particular fact* that every speaker asserted is true, we can observe that the implications of the propositions expressed are true. Thus, Coady over-estimates the 'field work' required in establishing (37).

It's therefore far from clear that Coady's objections are decisive. Direct internalism deserves serious consideration in the light of the responses from Lyons, Adler and Shogenji. There's enough dissent to suggest that a new objection is wanted; one that doesn't simply charge that direct internalism imposes excessive demands on a listener's belief being justified.

The problem for direct internalism that I think is more pressing concerns the thought that justification from testimony admits degrees. You might have two beliefs based on testimony that are both justified but not equally justified. To bring this point out, consider a modified version of the very first case in 1.1. Suppose a tourist arrives in a city and wants to know where the cathedral is. She thus asks the nearest bystander, who provides her with some directions. The directions happen to be correct, but the bystander is in fact another tourist who has a vague idea about the cathedral, but is far from certain. Later, on the way to the cathedral, the tourist encounters her friend, whom she knows to live in the area and asks her where the cathedral is. Her friend confirms the whereabouts of the cathedral.

Intuitively, I think that the tourist's belief is better justified after she asks her friend than after she just asks the other tourist. Furthermore, I think that intuition should be something that internalist and externalist theories should want to explain. Externalist theories should think that it's true because the tourist's friend has justification that the other tourist lacks. Internalist theories should think that it's true because the fact that the listener knows that her friend is a local provides her with an additional reflectively accessible reason to think that the testimony about the whereabouts of the cathedral is true. It does this because the listener knows that her friend is knowledgeable she doesn't know this about the other tourist. In addition, the fact that the local is the tourist's friend gives her a reason for thinking that the speaker isn't lying.

Direct internalism, however, can't allow this. According to direct internalist theories, beliefs based on testimony are justified by an individual's evidence for (37). In the case above, the tourist's evidence for (37) after she hears the other tourist's testimony and after she hears her friend's. The intuition that her justification is enhanced comes from the idea that she has some reasons available that aren't evidence of (37) but are still relevant to her belief. Since direct internalists think that any evidence not relevant to (37) is also not relevant to a listener's belief, they can't accommodate this.

The problem for direct internalist theories thus concerns the fact that not all of someone's justified beliefs based on testimony are equally justified. I think that this warrants leaving direct internalism to one side.

4.5.2 Indirect Internalism

In light of the sceptical worries about (DI), we might try and spell out (TI) as follows:

- (II) A listener's reflectively accessible reasons for thinking that a speaker's testimony is true are exclusively those reasons that she has for thinking that testimony *of the type in question* is generally true.

According to this approach, the mere fact that a statement is an instance of testimony doesn't indicate that it's true. Rather, the fact that it's testimony *of a particular type* indicates that it's true. The inferential pattern thus goes like this:

- (39) S said that p .
 (40) S's testimony that p is an instance of testimony-type ϕ .
 (41) Instances of testimony-type ϕ are generally true.

Therefore

- (42) p .

It would seem that there are at least two obvious reasons for preferring this *indirect internalism* to direct internalism. The first is that it doesn't have the problematic consequences Coady identifies for direct internalism. According to indirect internalism, a listener doesn't have to establish that *all* testimony is generally true, she just has to establish that *some* testimony is generally true; testimony of whatever the relevant type is. It's also natural to think that there's a bigger evidential base available too. I can use testimony to establish that testimony of the relevant type is generally true. Suppose that I'm trying to establish that testimony of type ϕ is generally true and you tell me that testimony of type ϕ is generally true. It might be alright for me to use your testimony to establish that testimony of type ϕ is generally true if your testimony is not itself an instance of testimony of type ϕ .

In other words, using testimony to justify beliefs based on testimony isn't obviously circular. If I've already established that testimony of type ψ is generally true and an instance of testimony of type ψ indicates that testimony of type ϕ is generally true, I can use this to establish that testimony of type ϕ is generally true. Of course, there might be worries in the form of a regress, here, since using testimony of type ψ to establish the general truth of testimony of type ϕ requires some other process that antecedently establishes the general truth of testimony of type ψ .⁹⁵ But at least there's no charge of circularity here.

⁹⁵This is the *problem of the criterion* manifesting itself for internalist theories of testimony. Again, an interesting discussion of this is contained in Chapter 2 of Huemer (2001).

Suppose I'm trying to establish that predictions about the weather made by weather forecasters is generally accurate and you tell me that it is. If you aren't a weather forecaster yourself, then it's hard to see how your testimony could be of the same type as the type of testimony that I'm trying to establish the reliability of. Your testimony isn't about the weather, it's about people's predictions about the weather and it's about testimony from a class of people of which you aren't a member. So it seems as though, where direct internalism couldn't allow me to use your testimony, indirect internalism can. There's thus a bigger evidential base available to indirect internalism.⁹⁶

The second advantage is that indirect internalism doesn't have the problem that I described for direct internalism concerning degrees of justification from testimony. Since indirect internalist theories deny that all beliefs based on testimony are justified by the same body of evidence, they can allow that believing testimony from a friend might yield a belief supported by better justification than believing testimony from a stranger.

These advantages notwithstanding, I think that the objections concerning scepticism and the fine-grainedness of justification still make trouble for indirect internalism. The indirect internalist owes us some account of exactly what types of testimony there are. Put another way, there needs to be a way of saying why a particular instance of testimony is an instance of type ϕ rather than type ψ .

As soon as we start thinking about an instance of testimony as a token of a particular type, questions arise about what the relevant type is. Think about the second example in 1.1, where a student overhears information about the visiting speaker's arrival from a member of staff. This ordinary instance of testimony is a member of various types. It's testimony from a work colleague, testimony about the arrival of a visiting speaker, testimony that was overheard rather than directed at the listener, testimony that was spoken rather than written, testimony produced on a Tuesday and so on.⁹⁷

Some of these might be plausible accounts of the type of testimony in the example and others are clearly implausible. So there's a worry about how to identify the type of testimony involved.⁹⁸ I think that the problems with indirect internalism go beyond this, though. I think that the problems of scepticism and fine-grainedness illustrated in 4.5.1 also illustrate a problem of identifying types

⁹⁶See also Faulkner (2011).

⁹⁷Coady (1992) raises this problem for indirect internalism, considering the reports of sick lions in Taronga Park Zoo and what type it might plausibly be assigned to (Coady, 1992, p. 84).

⁹⁸By itself, this observation isn't anything new, either in the epistemology of testimony, or in philosophy more generally. One might think that difficulties in explaining what type of thing something is motivates metaphysical problems of coincident objects and composition more generally. See Michael Burke (1992; 1994; 1997), Peter van Inwagen (1990), Ned Markosian (2008), James van Cleve (2008) and David Wiggins (2001). Applied to the epistemology of testimony, see Coady (1992) and Faulkner (2011).

of testimony.

The problem is that considering scepticism and fine-grainedness more carefully leads to conflicting demands on an account of type identity. Considering scepticism shows that types of testimony need to be broad, to allow someone to acquire evidence that the type of testimony in question is generally true. Considering fine-grainedness shows that types of testimony need to be narrow, to allow for variations in degrees of justification. The idea is that these two considerations impose opposite demands on a theory of type identity.

Indirect internalists think that there's some anti-sceptical value in the idea that a listener doesn't have to establish as grand a claim as direct internalists think. The idea is that, because we don't have to establish that *all testimony* is generally reliable, just that *testimony of type ϕ* is generally reliable, we don't need to do so much background work and it's easier to see how we might have the kind of reasons necessary for a belief in testimony to be justified. So one might think that indirect internalism doesn't have direct internalism's sceptical problems.

This point becomes all the more plausible when we recall the point about the available evidential base from other people's testimony. This plus the fact that there's a less ambitious claim that needs to be established means that it seems that indirect internalism has an anti-sceptical advantage over direct internalism.

We should, however, be careful before getting too carried away with this idea. In narrowing the claim that we have to establish, from the claim that testimony is generally reliable to the claim that testimony of type ϕ is reliable, we also make it harder to find relevant evidence, the above point about using the testimony of others notwithstanding. We can't just use *any* evidence that testimony is reliable to establish that testimony of type ϕ is reliable—we can only use evidence relevant to the testimony of type ϕ .

What type of testimony is the case of overhearing from 1.1? One suggestion might be that it's *testimony about the visiting speaker*. It seems reasonable that content of the testimony—what the testimony is about—might determine the type of testimony it is. The listener might well have never heard testimony about a visiting speaker before, because she's new to academia and just finding out how things work. So it seems that the listener has no justification for her belief until she establishes that testimony about visiting speakers is generally true.

The fact that there's an additional evidential base available might well not be of any additional help either. It might well be that the listener isn't aware of any testimony relevant to the reliability of testimony about the visiting speaker. The sceptical problem here isn't that the listener needs evidence that would be available if only testimony was a legitimate source of evidence. It's that it's not clear that the relevant evidence is available at all. This comes with a narrow account of types of testimony. Avoiding scepticism thus depends on the relevant

type being fairly wide.

There are problems with a wide account too, though. The previous worry about direct internalist theories tells us this. The moral of that story was that, since we think that beliefs based on testimony can be justified to different degrees, we need to allow that different bodies of evidence can support different testimony-based beliefs. This means that we need enough different types of testimony to accommodate the various different degrees of justification. It's not clear that a wide account allows this.

Thinking again about the overhearing case in 1.1, one might think that if the listener knows that the speaker is a close personal friend of the visiting speaker, then this gives the listener an additional reason for thinking that the speaker's testimony is true. Again, this is a reason that internalist theories should want to accommodate. But this means that the type of testimony in question needs to be relatively fine-grained. The relevant type has to be somewhat narrowly defined in order to make sense of the fact that the listener knows that the speaker is speaking about a close personal friend gives the listener more reason to think that she is saying something true.

Ultimately, it seems that thinking about the fine-grainedness of types of testimony makes difficulties for indirect internalism. On the one hand, indirect internalist theories want types of testimony to be relatively broad, because if they're too narrow, then it's too difficult for a listener to establish the reliability of the type in question and indirect internalism has the same sceptical problems direct internalism. So the correct type presumably *isn't* something like *testimony said by Mr. X about the whereabouts of Mr. Y*.

On the other hand, however, indirect internalist theories need types of testimony to be relatively narrow. If the types of testimony are too broad, then indirect internalist theories aren't going to be able to explain how justification from testimony can be as fine-grained as we think that it can. Giving a broad account of types of testimony leads to the problem I identified for direct internalism in 4.5.1 concerning the idea that justification from testimony comes in degree.

Whilst it seemed that indirect internalism fared altogether better than direct internalism, on closer inspection this seems mistaken. Appealing to types of testimony can make sense of the idea that a listener doesn't need to establish the reliability of testimony in general and the idea that beliefs based on testimony are justified differently. Ultimately, however, addressing the sceptical worry involves a wide conception of types of testimony, where addressing the second requires a narrow conception. It's far from clear that indirect internalism can provide an account that's both sufficiently broad and sufficiently narrow.

4.5.3 Particularist Internalism

I therefore don't think we should spell out (TI) in terms of (II). Instead, we could try the following:

- (PI) A listener's reflectively accessible reasons for thinking that a speaker's testimony is true are exclusively those reasons that she has for thinking that *the testimony in question* is true.

Call the attempt to spell out (TI) in terms of (PI) *particularist internalism*. The traditional discussions of particularist internalism come from Fricker (1987; 1994; 1995; 2006a; 2006b).

Thus far, in discussing internalist theories of testimony, we've seen that there are at least three main thoughts that a theory of testimony needs to respect. The first is that forming justified beliefs based on testimony needs to be possible without extensive background work from the listener. The second is that beliefs based on testimony can be justified to different degrees. The worry about direct internalism was that it doesn't seem able to accommodate this thought. Third, there is the thought that gullibility doesn't yield justified beliefs. Whilst justification from testimony can't be too hard to come by, it also can't be too easy.⁹⁹

Fricker's endorsement of (TI) in terms of (PI) respects each of these thoughts. The central motivation for Fricker's theory is the idea that forming beliefs through gullibility is irrational and is thereby not a way of forming justified beliefs. As observed in 2.2.1 the particularist internalism Fricker defends seeks to make sense of trusting a speaker by offering a conception of trust according to which trust is made epistemically proper (or otherwise) by its relationship to the trusting party's background reasons.

The idea is that, in responding to a speaker's testimony, a listener should monitor the speaker in order to support the listener's beliefs about the speaker's sincerity and competence. These beliefs then form a theory about the speaker that serves to 'render it comprehensible why she made that assertion, on that occasion' (Fricker, 1994, p. 149).¹⁰⁰ This explanation can ground the listener's belief in the speaker's testimony.

Peter Lipton offers a similar picture of justification from testimony. Lipton states that:

[A] recipient of testimony ("hearer") decides whether to believe the claim of the informant ("speaker") by considering whether the truth

⁹⁹Gullibility also gives rise to the problem of easy knowledge. See Cohen (2002), van Cleve (2003) and Vogel (2000).

¹⁰⁰Against the idea that listeners exemplify these kind of critical faculties, see Kourken Michaelian (2010) and Joseph Shieber (2011).

of that claim would figure in the best explanation of the fact that the speaker made it (Lipton, 2007, p. 238).¹⁰¹

Anna-Sara Malmgren states something similar:

[T]he recipient of testimony is seen as making an inference to the best explanation of why her source – say, John – said that *p*: she infers that John said that *p* in part because he believes that *p*, and she infers that John believes that *p* in part because *p* is the case (Malmgren, 2006, p. 230).

Importantly, particularist internalism doesn't think that *only* considerations specific to the instance in question can be part of the listener's justification. According to particularist internalism, a listener *can* use general considerations, but can also use particular ones.

In the case from 1.1, where the student overhears the member of staff, the idea is that the student should think about *why* the member of staff would be saying that the visiting speaker will arrive at midday. In doing so, the student should consider carefully any obvious reasons for the member of staff saying something false, either through being mistaken or through being deceptive. Having formulated her theory of why the member of staff made that statement, the student can decide whether or not to believe that the visiting speaker will arrive at midday based on the member of staff's testimony.

The first thing to notice is that particularist internalism respects the thought that gullibility doesn't yield justified belief. This is because a listener's explanation of the speaker's testimony provides her with a reason for thinking that the speaker's testimony is true, provided she monitors the speaker as particularist internalist theories require. A listener's belief being justified is conditional on her explanation being grounded in appropriate monitoring and providing an explanation involving the speaker's testimony being true. So particularist internalism respects the thought that gullibility doesn't yield justified beliefs.

Particularist internalism also respects the thought that forming justified beliefs through testimony doesn't involve excessive amounts of background investigation from the listener. This becomes clearer when the details of the monitoring Fricker describes are filled in. The claim that the listener 'should be continually evaluating [the speaker] for trustworthiness throughout their exchange' might seem to disrespect the thought that beliefs from testimony being justified doesn't involve implausible amounts of background work from the listener (Fricker, 1994, p. 151).

¹⁰¹See also Lipton (1998) and Gelfert (2010).

Fricker argues that this isn't the case, though. Establishing a speaker's sincerity only requires monitoring for signs of insincerity that are 'very frequently betrayed in a speaker's manner' (Fricker, 1994, p. 150). Likewise, monitoring for competence only needs to involve considering the content of the utterance to establish whether or not it is the kind of thing that is within the scope of what speakers are usually competent with regard to (Fricker, 1994, p. 151). Similarly, Lipton observes that the listener doesn't have to establish the truth of the speaker's testimony *before* formulating her explanation of why the speaker said what she did (Lipton, 2007, p. 245). The result is that the requirements on the listener are supposed to be sufficiently minimal as to allow that a listener can form a justified belief in a speaker's testimony without excessive investigation.

Particularist internalism also respects the thought that beliefs based on testimony can be justified to different degrees. Particularist internalism makes no general claims about testimony, either *tout court*, or in terms of different types. Respecting the thoughts about gullibility thus doesn't require an appeal to types of testimony. Fricker observes that 'to achieve this in any one case I need not establish any *generalities* about testimony at all' (Fricker, 1995, p. 404).

There is thus a similarity between particularist internalism and *moral particularism*. Moral particularism 'claims that morality has no need for principles at all. Moral thought, moral judgement, and the possibility of moral distinctions—none of these depends in any way on the provision of a suitable supply of moral principles' (Dancy, 2004, p. 5). Particularist internalism claims that a theory of testimony need establish no generalities at all. A listener being able to give an adequate defence of her belief in a speaker's testimony doesn't require the provision of a suitable supply of types of testimony.

Having no appeal to generalities is that particularist internalism allows for as many degrees of justification as is necessary. Thinking back to the case in 4.5.1, where a tourist is given directions by a bystander and then these are confirmed later by the tourist's friend, particularist internalism is able to make sense of the idea that the fact that the tourist knows that her friend is a local giving her an extra justificatory reason. And since particularist internalism allows for particular as well as general facts being relevant, particularist internalism can be as sensitive as is required.

4.6 Summary: Internalist Theories

Internalists think that justification for beliefs based on testimony is a matter of reflectively accessible reasons. Exactly what kind of reasons justify these beliefs provides a way of individuating internalist theories. Internalist theories can be

placed on a spectrum. At one end, direct internalist theories hold that justification from testimony is a matter of a listener's reasons for thinking that testimony is generally true. Traditionally, the worry about direct internalism has been to do with its sceptical consequences. I argued in 4.5.1 that there's a bigger problem for direct internalism concerning the fine-grainedness of the justification that can support beliefs based on testimony. I argued that the justification that supports our beliefs based on testimony is more fine-grained than direct internalism has the resources to make sense of.

Further along the spectrum is indirect internalism. According to indirect internalism, a listener's justification for her belief in a speaker's testimony is a matter of her reasons for thinking that testimony of the relevant type is generally true. I argued in 4.5.2 that, whilst indirect internalism fares altogether better in making sense of our intuitions about justified beliefs based on testimony, it still isn't fine-grained enough to properly accommodate our intuitions. There were also sceptical worries about indirect internalism and worries about how to identify instances of testimony as tokens of a particular type.

This led to particularist internalism, at the opposite end of the spectrum to direct internalism. According to particularist internalism, the relevant set of the listener's reasons are the reasons for thinking that the particular instance of testimony is true. Particularist internalism gets away from the problems of direct and indirect internalism. By allowing that a listener can use facts about individual instances of testimony, particularist internalism shows how beliefs based on testimony can be justified to various different degrees. Since it makes no appeal to types of testimony, the worries associated with indirect internalism don't arise either.

Whilst particularist internalism yields the strongest internalist theory, I think there are reasons to think that even particularist internalism doesn't yield a satisfactory theory of testimony. I argue in the next chapter that particularist internalism fails to give an adequate account of justification from testimony and the reason for this is because *no* internalist theory of testimony can offer a satisfactory account of justification from testimony. The problems with (PI) can thus be traced back to the more general (TI).

Chapter 5

Against Internalist Theories

5.1 Introduction

Internalist theories of justification from testimony, as I described them in the previous chapter, identify justification from testimony with a distinctive set of factors—those that are reflectively accessible to the listener. The strongest version of internalism, which I called *particularist internalism* in 4.5.3, holds that the reflectively accessible factors are those reasons that the listener has for thinking that the testimony in question is true. Once we buy into an internalist framework, there's not much wrong with particularist internalism. Nonetheless, I think there are reasons for being reluctant to buy into an internalist framework in the first place. In this chapter, I'll advance a case against the basic idea behind internalist theories of justification from testimony.¹⁰² This was expressed in (TI), which was stated as:

(TI) A listener's justification for her belief based on a speaker's testimony is exclusively a matter of her reflectively accessible reasons for thinking that the speaker's testimony is true.

A consequence of (TI) is the following:

(TI*) If any two individuals are alike with respect to reasons for thinking that a speaker's testimony is true, then they are alike with respect to justification for their respective beliefs in what the speaker says.

Internalists and externalists alike agree that (TI*) is a consequence of internalism.¹⁰³

¹⁰²Where detailed discussion requires a commitment to a form of internalism, however, I'll use particularist internalism, for the reasons given in the previous chapter.

¹⁰³See Conee and Feldman (2004), Gibbons (2006) and Greco (2010).

One thing that it's important to note immediately about (TI*) is that it's about individuals that are *alike with respect to reasons* rather than merely individuals that *have the same reasons*. This is crucial. You and I might have the same reasons for thinking that it will rain tomorrow, but if you actually *base* your belief on your reasons whereas I ignore mine and just believe that it will rain tomorrow on a hunch, then we aren't alike with respect to reasons and your justificatory status is different to mine. Stipulating (TI*) in terms of being *alike with respect to reasons* ensures that internalist theories give this intuitively correct result.¹⁰⁴

I think that (TI*) is false and, as a result, the critical discussion here will focus on (TI*). I'll present an argument that I think makes trouble for (TI*) and therefore for (TI) but I'll leave open exactly how far the case might generalise to the more general internalist commitment expressed in (I) or internalist theories of justification from other sources. The strategy that I'm taking here involves presenting a case of two individuals who are alike with respect to reasons, but are intuitively not alike with respect to justification. This falsifies (TI*) and since (TI*) is a consequence of (TI), this makes an argument against (TI) by *modus tollens*.

This strategy is one that critics of internalism in general have sought to pursue. John Gibbons describes the strategy like this:

[Y]ou just tell some stories. If you can have two people who are the same on the inside, in the relevant sense of that expression, but different on the outside where, intuitively, one of them is justified but the other is not, then internalism about justification is false (Gibbons, 2006, p. 20).¹⁰⁵

Again, internalists and externalists alike agree that, *if* such a story can be told, then this means trouble for internalism. The question is whether or not it can. Internalists think it can't. I suggest that it can, at least where testimony is concerned.

Pursuing this strategy doesn't require a case in which one individual is (intuitively) justified and the other (intuitively) isn't. That would be sufficient, but it wouldn't be necessary. A situation where the two are internally alike, but intuitively justified to different degrees will do. This is important. The core internalist thesis is *not* that:

- (TI**) If any two individuals are alike with respect to reasons for thinking that a speaker's testimony is true, then either:
- (1) They are both justified in believing what the speaker says.

¹⁰⁴This circumvents some of the discussion in Greco (2010).

¹⁰⁵Gibbons then goes on to try and do exactly this. Greco (2010) also employs this strategy. Anthony Brueckner (2011) seeks to respond to Greco's arguments.

Or

- (2) They are both unjustified in believing what the speaker says.

Rather, it is that if two individuals are alike with respect to reasons for thinking that a speaker's testimony is true, then they are alike with respect to justification for their beliefs in what the speaker says. Obviously, one way for this to be false is for one to be justified where the other isn't, but it isn't the only way.

This is particularly important because of the conclusion of the motivations for particularist internalism. One of the primary motivations for particularist internalism over its internalist rivals was the thought that any theory of justification from testimony needs to be sensitive to the idea that justification admits various degrees. This came out in 4.5.3. And the fact that theories need to be sensitive to matters of degree connects with the point that difference in degree of justification can undermine (TI*).

Since particularist internalism was identified as the strongest version of internalism about justification from testimony, it's worth observing how this spells out the general strategy above. Rejecting (TI), when this is understood in terms of the particularist internalist theory given in (PI) involves showing that there are two individuals who are alike with respect to reasons for thinking that a particular instance of testimony is true, but are intuitively not alike with respect to justification. This is what I aim to do in this chapter.

I'll start off by presenting what I take to be a situation that falsifies (TI). Internalist theories will obviously want to reject either the idea that the individuals are alike internally, or else reject the idea that they're not alike with respect to justification. With this in mind, I'll first argue that an internalist attempt at characterising the individuals as alike with respect to justification is unacceptable. Lastly, I'll argue against internalist strategies for denying that the individuals are alike with respect to justification are also problematic.

5.2 A Counterexample

In support of the idea that two individuals might be alike with respect to reasons for thinking a speaker's testimony is true but different with respect to justification, consider the following two cases:

DOCTOR: One day Eric discovers a rash on his arm and goes to visit his doctor Ernie. Eric has various good reasons for thinking Ernie is a competent doctor and a sincere testifier. These reasons consist in both inductive evidence of Ernie previously having correctly diagnosed Eric's dermatological conditions in the past as well as evidence of the general accuracy of what doctors say. Ernie correctly tells Eric

that the rash on his arm means he has condition α . Ernie correctly tells Eric that he has condition α because, whilst the rash on Eric's arm looks similar to a rash associated with condition β . Ernie can tell that the rash on Eric's arm is the one associated with α rather than the one associated with condition β .

DOCTOR*: One day Eric* discovers a rash on his arm and goes to visit his doctor Ernie*. Eric* has just as many and varied good reasons for thinking Ernie* is a competent doctor and a sincere testifier as Eric (in DOCTOR) has for thinking Ernie is a competent doctor and a sincere testifier. Ernie* tells Eric* that the rash on his arm means that he has condition α . Like Ernie's diagnosis of Eric, Ernie*'s diagnosis of Eric* is correct. Unlike Ernie, however, Ernie* is unable to distinguish between the rash associated with condition α and the rash associated with condition β . This is because Ernie* has a more limited experience and range of expertise than Ernie and as a result is unaware of condition β .

The argument against internalist theories goes like this:

- (43) Eric and Eric* are alike with respect to reasons for thinking that the testimony in question is true.
- (44) Eric and Eric* are not alike with respect to justification.

Since (TI*) says that no such conjunction is possible, it follows from this that (TI*) is false.

Before turning to the defence of (43) and (44), it is important to take note that in discussing (43) is that since Eric and Eric* are different listeners being addressed by different speakers, they won't have the exact same evidence for thinking that the speaker is saying something true in each case. Given this, there's a sense in which Eric and Eric* won't be *alike* with respect to reasons for thinking that the testimony in question is true, since their observations will be different. Nonetheless, this sense of being alike, according to which two individuals are alike if they have literally the same set of reasons, is not the sense of alike that is at issue in (43) and in (TI*). If it was, then (TI*) would be meaningless, since individuals are never alike in this sense.

What matters for being alike, in the sense in question here, is the *strength* of the reasons in question. Suppose that the reasons that Eric has for thinking that Ernie's diagnosis is accurate are just a matter of Eric's inductive evidence of Ernie making correct diagnoses before, as well as some background inductive evidence about doctors. Suppose also that the reasons that Eric* has for thinking that

Ernie*'s diagnosis is accurate are just a matter of Eric*'s inductive evidence of Ernie* making correct diagnoses before, as well as similar background inductive evidence about doctors. Lastly, suppose that Eric*'s inductive evidence is the same in terms of the number of observations across a range of symptoms as Eric's. For the purposes of (43) and (TI*), Eric and Eric* are alike with respect to reasons in virtue of having similar inductive (and no other) grounds for thinking that the testimony is true in each case. This is an internalist verdict.

We can thus stipulate that Eric and Eric* are *ex hypothesi* alike with respect to reasons for thinking that the testimony in question is true in each case. In any event, our route to this stipulation is not blocked by the fact that Eric and Eric* are not alike in the sense of having *exactly the same* inductive evidence.¹⁰⁶ I will return to the question of whether or not (43) can be stipulated uncontroversially in 5.5. First, however, I propose to consider (44).

5.3 The Epistemic Difference

It seems to me to be intuitive that there's justification available to Eric that isn't available to Eric*. The fact that Ernie is a more competent doctor than Ernie* means that Eric is better off epistemically than Eric*. Most obviously, this can't be explained in terms of truth, since both Eric and Eric* are told true things about their conditions. Ordinarily, we think that it's better for people to be told about their conditions by a more competent doctor, regardless of whether or not they've checked out the credentials of the doctor. Whether or not the patient has checked out the doctor's credentials doesn't determine the doctor's competence and the intuition is that it's better for someone to be told about medical conditions by a more competent doctor. The trouble is, however, internalist theories can't allow for this, given the truth of (43), because it's incompatible with (TI*).

The intuition that Ernie's testimony makes stronger justification available than Ernie*'s is incompatible with an internalist characterisation of testimony. According to internalist theories, there's one way that believing testimony can yield justified beliefs. That is by testimony functioning as evidence, as described in 1.3. The trouble is, such a model of justification from testimony can't accommodate the intuition that Eric is better off epistemically than Eric*. Since treating a speaker's testimony as evidence involves the listener basing her belief on her reasons for thinking that the speaker's testimony is true and both Eric and Eric* are alike in this respect, they should, according to internalist theories,

¹⁰⁶Indeed, one can stipulate further that Eric and Eric* are twins in the sense Putnam's (1973) twin earth thought experiment makes use of, in that their experiences so far have been identical, including their engagement with Eric/Eric* and the medical profession more generally.

be alike with respect to justification. The intuition that they aren't doesn't fit with internalism about testimony.

Transmission theories, on the other hand, have no problem making sense of the idea that there is justification available to Eric that outstrips the justification available to Eric*. Unlike internalist theories, transmission theories don't think that the only way for beliefs based on testimony to be justified is for the listener to treat the speaker's testimony as evidence. Indeed, transmission theories allow a form of justification from testimony that is exactly sensitive to differences in the epistemic credentials of the speaker. Transmission theories thus easily explain the intuition that there is justification available to Eric that outstrips the justification available to Eric* and correctly attributes this to the fact that Ernie is a more competent doctor than Ernie*. Ernie's enhanced competence provides him with enhanced justification for believing that Eric has condition α and transmission theories hold that this fact means that Ernie's testimony can make additional justification available to Eric.

The force of the argument here obviously depends on our finding it intuitive that Eric, in taking Ernie's word for it that Eric has condition α , forms a belief that is justified to a greater extent than Eric*'s belief, taken on Ernie*'s word. It might well be the case that defenders of internalist theories simply reject this intuition as misleading. But, as I pointed out in 5.1, I'm trying to provide a reason to avoid committing to internalism in the first place, rather than a reason to convince committed internalists to revise their views. Something similar happens with scepticism. There's more than one way to try and respond to the sceptical threat. One response is to try and knock it back in a Moorean style, by arguing that we just *do* in fact know the things that sceptical arguments deny that we know.¹⁰⁷

As with scepticism, so with internalism about testimony. One strategy for rejecting internalism might be to confront it head-on. I think that the dispute between internalism and externalism is such that head-on disagreement is unlikely to make much progress against steadfast advocates on either side, though. Internalist theories of testimony are so fundamentally different to transmission theories that it's hard to see what could motivate either side other than intuitions about a test case. And arguing in this way leaves it open for either side to just deny the case. So I'm pessimistic about converting internalists about testimony round to transmission theories. But this pessimism doesn't mean that there's nothing to be said.

Even if I'm correct in thinking that there just isn't enough common ground to be had here to make a head-on rebuttal philosophically satisfying, there is

¹⁰⁷See McDowell (1982; 1994a; 1995; 2002; 2011), Moore (1925; 1939), Pritchard (2012b) and Sosa (1999).

another approach available. Instead of confronting scepticism head-on, the alternative is to try and push the sceptical threat to one side. In this spirit, Timothy Williamson states that:

If a refutation of scepticism is supposed to reason one out of the hole, then scepticism is irrefutable. The most to be hoped for is something which will prevent the sceptic (who may be oneself) from reasoning one into the hole in the first place (Williamson, 2000, p. 27).

Again, as with scepticism, so with internalism about testimony. It might be that there isn't an argument to be made against internalist theories of testimony that will convert internalists. I think that an analogue of Williamson's approach to scepticism, however, gives grounds for optimism about an argument for transmission theories over internalism. The cases of DOCTOR and DOCTOR*, I think, generate intuitions that provide a reason to avoid taking an internalist approach to testimony in the first place.¹⁰⁸ The remainder of this chapter is thus devoted to strengthening the argument against internalism. In the next three sections, I'll explain more about why there's an epistemic difference between Eric and Eric*. After that, I'll consider two ways in which internalist theories might seek to deny (43) and argue that this epistemic difference is underpinned by an internal difference. This first appeals to the idea that Eric has a false belief where Eric* doesn't. The second appeals to the idea that there's an internal difference because Eric*'s reasons are misleading, where Eric's aren't.

5.4 Motivating the Epistemic Difference

5.4.1 Internalist Intuitions

Let's first consider (44), the claim that there's an epistemic difference, specifically a difference with respect to justification, between Eric and Eric*. There's an obvious similarity between the DOCTOR and DOCTOR* cases and the cases involved in an argument for internalism known as the *New Evil Demon Argument*. The New Evil Demon Argument is directed specifically against theories of justification in general that characterise justification as a matter of reliability, but it's relevant here because it would seem that the argument can be directed equally well at any other theory that denies (I)—any externalist theory. The similarity means that we should be cautious before using intuitions about DOCTOR and DOCTOR* in an argument against internalism.

¹⁰⁸Of course, one might object that the case against internalism is still based on intuitions about test cases. It's worth remembering, however, that the motivations for internalist theories in 4.3 were grounded likewise. There is thus a sense in which the fact that the argument in this chapter involves an appeal to intuitions is just as it should be.

Lehrer and Stewart Cohen express the central idea behind the New Evil Demon Argument in the following:

Imagine that, unknown to us, our cognitive processes, those involved in perception, memory and inference, are rendered unreliable by the actions of a powerful demon or malevolent scientist. It would follow on reliabilist views that under such conditions the beliefs generated by those processes would not be justified. This result is unacceptable. The truth of the demon hypothesis also entails that our experiences and our reasonings are just what they would be if our cognitive processes were reliable, and, therefore, that we would be just as well justified in believing what we do if the demon hypothesis were true as if it were false. Contrary to reliabilism, we aver that under the conditions of the demon hypothesis our beliefs would be justified in an epistemic sense. Justification is a normative concept. It is an evaluation of how well one has pursued one's epistemic goals. Consequently, if we have reason to believe that perception, for example, is a reliable process, then the mere fact that it turns out not to be reliable, because of some improbable contingency, does not obliterate our justification for perceptual belief. This is especially clear when we have good reason to believe that the contingency, which, in fact, makes our cognitive processes unreliable, does not obtain (Lehrer and Cohen, 1983, pp. 192-193).

Lehrer and Cohen thus hold that, rather than making a case *against* internalist theories, these kind of cases actually make an argument *for* internalism.¹⁰⁹ The idea is that, if I'm forming beliefs using my perceptual faculties, which are reliable and my brain-in-a-vat counterpart is having subjectively indistinguishable experiences, albeit ones that are entirely misleading, then we're both equally justified. Lehrer and Cohen think of justification as 'an evaluation of how well one has pursued one's epistemic goals' and this is supposed to support the internalist idea that justification is a matter of basing one's beliefs on one's reasons.¹¹⁰

The idea is that we're both doing what we're supposed to do: considering the way things appear to us and forming beliefs that accord with this. This point notwithstanding, I suggest that the intuitive verdict about cases of this type (particularly the comparison of Eric and Eric*) is an externalist one. I suggest that there is a robust intuition that Eric and Eric* are not alike with respect to justification.¹¹¹ I'll leave aside the question of whether or not this translates back to

¹⁰⁹See also Foley (1985).

¹¹⁰See also Lehrer (2000).

¹¹¹I'm by no means alone in thinking that I and my envatted counterpart are alike with respect

the cases Lehrer and Cohen invoke in the New Evil Demon Argument. Instead, I'll focus on defending the claim that the cases involved in the New Evil Demon Argument exert no substantial pressure to give an internalist account of DOCTOR and DOCTOR*.

One thing that it's important to notice is that internalist theories don't obviously have a monopoly on the claim that justification is 'an evaluation of how well one has pursued one's epistemic goals.' Consider the following claim from Sosa:

Belief is a kind of performance, which attains one level of success if it is true (or accurate), a second level if it is competent (or adroit), and a third if its truth manifests the believer's competence (ie., if it is apt) (Sosa, 2010, p. 1).

This claim is at the heart of Sosa's theory of knowledge (which is externalist and denies (I)). The idea is that justification is a matter of how well one has pursued one's epistemic goals, but the important point for Sosa's theory is that how well one has pursued one's epistemic goals can be evaluated objectively. What's at stake in figuring out the justificatory states of the individuals in the New Evil Demon cases is thus not the question of whether or not justification is a matter of cognitive success, but whether or not it is a matter of *reflectively accessible* cognitive success. Hence Cohen states that:

My argument hinges on viewing justification as a normative notion. Intuitively, if S's belief is appropriate to the available evidence, he is not to be held responsible for circumstances beyond his ken (Cohen, 1984, p. 282).

In this spirit, Cohen (1984) considers another, similar, case. Cohen considers two individuals who are systematically confused by an evil demon, such that each systematically forms false beliefs before reasoning about these in different ways. One forms beliefs in line with the canons of inductive reasoning, inferring from the fact that all previously observed *F*s have been *G*s to the conclusion that future *F*s will also be *G*s and so on, whereas the other employs wishful thinking, commits various fallacies and engages in otherwise intuitively bad reasoning. Since both are systematically deceived, however, the processes that the individuals employ are equally unreliable or, more generally, equally badly off in terms of factors that externalists think are relevant to justification (Cohen, 1984, p. 282).

Thinking of justification in externalist terms yields the thought that the individuals are alike with respect to justification, since they are alike with respect to justification. This claim is also endorsed by Brewer (1997), Pritchard (2012b) and Sutton (2005; 2007).

to truth-conduciveness. Cohen charges, however, that this is a plainly unacceptable verdict. There is a difference in terms of how *reasonable* or *rational* the two individuals are and, according to Cohen, this supports a difference in terms of their justification and externalist theories have no way of accounting for this (Cohen, 1984, pp. 283-284). The idea is that the intuitiveness of *this* verdict makes trouble for externalist theories.

Internalist arguments about New Evil Demon hypotheses notwithstanding, I think that there's an intuition that can be brought out to support (44). Applied to the DOCTOR and DOCTOR* cases, the intuition supports the claim that Eric's belief is justified to a greater degree than Eric*'s. It also supports the verdict that Eric has been more successful in pursuing his epistemic goals than Eric*.

The argument goes as follows:

- (45) Being unaware of facts about one's situation does not enhance one's epistemic status.
- (46) It is intuitive that Eric and Eric* are alike with respect to justification only because they are unaware of facts about their situation.

Therefore

- (47) Eric and Eric* are not alike with respect to justification.¹¹²

First, let's consider (45). The idea is that, ordinarily, it's not good for you, epistemically, to be unaware of the facts about your situation. This can be brought out by considering another type of case. Take a paradigm Gettier case—a case showing that a belief being justified isn't always sufficient for it to amount to knowledge—discussed by Russell (1948). An individual looks at a clock, which says that it is 17:35. It is in fact 17:35 but the clock actually stopped 24 hours ago and the individual happens to consult it at the time that corresponds to the time shown by the clock. It's intuitive (suppose) that the individual's belief is justified, but as Russell points out, it is highly intuitive that such a person doesn't know.¹¹³

One highly plausible explanation of why this is a Gettier case is because the individual lacks certain information. Richard Foley argues for this (Foley, 2012, p. 5). In the case of the stopped clock, the individual lacks the information that

¹¹²Recall, the relevant conclusion here is simply that Eric and Eric* aren't alike with respect to justification, rather than that the individuals involved in the New Evil Demon Argument aren't alike with respect to justification.

¹¹³Actually, it's probably contentious whether or not the person's justified. What counts as a Gettier case depends in (important) part on what you think makes for justification. If it's reliability, then consulting broken instruments probably doesn't make for justified belief. And Russell doesn't present the case as a Gettier case, just as a case of true belief that isn't knowledge. But whatever you think makes for justified belief, the story I run here with Russell's stopped clock case can be adapted to any other Gettier case.

the clock in fact stopped 24 hours ago. If the individual did know this, then she would be in a position to infer from this fact that the time is actually 17:35.

Regardless of whether or not Foley is correct in thinking that this account generalises to all Gettier cases, it seems that, in Russell's case, the individual's epistemic status is damaged by the fact that she lacks certain information. The individual doesn't get to know that the time is 17:35 because she's unaware of the fact that the clock has stopped (and couldn't reasonably be expected to have figured it out). The individual's lack of information damages her epistemic status. She would be in a position to know, but she's missing information and this is bad for her. This motivates (45).

Nonetheless, there is clearly a lacuna here. There are obviously some cases in which it is epistemically advantageous to be unaware of some information. Consider a situation in which someone looks at a clock that tells her that the time is 17:35. The clock is working normally and the individual comes to form the true belief that the time is 17:35. But suppose that someone had nefariously planted a sign nearby saying that the clock was in fact not working, but the individual missed it. Intuitively, it seems that missing the sign is beneficial to the individual's epistemic status. Her belief that it is 17:35 is true and is justified, but it seems that this justification depends on her missing the misleading sign. If she'd seen it, then her justification would have been defeated. It's thus too simplistic to say that an individual lacking certain information damages her epistemic status, as (45) does.

This obviously raises the question of *why* it's epistemically beneficial to be unaware of the evidence in the latter case, but it's damaging in the former case. The obvious answer, I think, is that the evidence in the latter case is misleading where the evidence in the former case isn't. In the former case, finding out that the clock stopped 24 hours ago would lead the individual to maintain her true belief, but finding out about the misleading sign would bring the individual to abandon her true belief.¹¹⁴ Hence (45) should really be replaced by the following:

(45*) Being unaware of facts about one's situation does not enhance one's epistemic status, *unless the facts are misleading*.

This, however, doesn't make a difference to the characterisation of DOCTOR and DOCTOR*. Returning to these cases, it seems as though Eric*'s belief that he has condition α being justified to the same extent that Eric's corresponding belief depends on Eric* being unaware of the fact that Ernie* is unable to distinguish the symptoms of condition α from those of condition β and Eric being unaware that Ernie can. Finding this out doesn't provide Eric* with any false information.

¹¹⁴Being caused to abandon one's true belief is a way of being misled. For a taxonomy of these, see Chisholm and Fehan (1977).

It might also be the case that finding out that Ernie* is unaware of condition β *shouldn't* give Eric* cause to abandon his true belief that he has condition α . As we will see later, it might well be that the fact that Ernie*'s inability to distinguish condition α from condition β doesn't render him objectively incompetent. It just renders him less competent than Ernie. All of this motivates (46).

There is thus a *prima facie* worry about the internalist claim that Eric and Eric* are in fact epistemically alike with respect to justification. Objectively speaking, Eric does better in investigating his condition because he finds a more competent doctor. In what sense this is attributable to him is another matter. The internalist reading of DOCTOR and DOCTOR* depends on the case being interpreted *subjectively* and there might be a reason for this coming from the New Evil Demon cases. But the considerations that motivate (45) and (46) make a case for it being an objective reading of the situation that matters here. This means that there's reason for (44). But there's more to be said in support of (44). The internalist reading of DOCTOR and DOCTOR* can be resisted on other grounds.

5.4.2 Against the Internalist Account

Anyone who has studied epistemology will be familiar with the following passage from Alvin Goldman:

Henry is driving in the country-side with his son. For the boy's edification Henry identifies various objects on the landscape as they come into view. "That's a cow," says Henry, "That's a tractor," "That's a silo," "That's a barn," etc. Henry has no doubt about the identity of these objects; in particular, he has no doubt that the last-mentioned object is a barn, which indeed it is. Each of the identified objects has features characteristic of its type. Moreover, each object is fully in view, Henry has excellent eyesight, and he has enough time to look at them reasonably carefully, since there is little traffic to distract him (Goldman, 1976, p. 772).

Goldman observes that, intuitively, most of us would want to say that, given the truth of his beliefs, Henry knows that he's looking at a cow, a tractor, a silo and a barn. At least, we would until we find out some crucial information:

[U]nknown to Henry, the district he has just entered is full of papier-maché facsimiles of barns. These facsimiles look from the road exactly like barns, but are really just facades, without back walls or interiors, quite incapable of being used as barns. They are so cleverly constructed that travelers invariably mistake them for barns. Having just entered the district, Henry has not encountered any facsimiles;

the object he sees is a genuine barn. But if the object on that site were a facsimile, Henry would mistake it for a barn (Goldman, 1976, p. 773).

When we find this out, Goldman correctly observes, we're more reluctant to say Henry knows that he's looking at a barn. Once we realise how easily he might have been deceived—it seems to be a matter of mere luck that he happened to see a genuine barn rather than a facsimile—we take it that Henry doesn't know that he's looking at a barn.

Goldman's example certainly raises interesting questions about discriminatory capacities and perceptual knowledge.¹¹⁵ To see how it relates to the epistemology of testimony, however, we need to consider two aspects of Goldman's example that are largely overlooked in the literature discussing Henry's case.

The first is that Henry is a *testifier*. Having identified the cow, the tractor, the silo and the barn, he then tells his son these about objects. Henry's son is thus also an epistemically interesting subject. The second point is that Henry's inability to discriminate between the real barn and the facsimiles doesn't affect his claims to knowing about the cow, the tractor or the silo.

The difference between Henry's belief that he's looking at a cow and his belief that he is looking at a nearby barn is one concerning safety, as discussed in 3.3 and 3.4. Henry might easily have looked at a facsimile and mistakenly thought he was looking at a barn.

Suppose we also assume that there are no facsimiles of cows, tractors or silos nearby. In this situation, Henry's claims to knowing about the cow, the tractor and the silo remain untroubled. Let's also assume that Henry's son takes his father's word for it in each case. Intuitively, Henry's son's beliefs about the cow, the tractor and the silo are epistemically better than his belief about the barn. They're better just because of Henry's cognitive competence.

The intuition here is the same as the intuition behind (44)—it is the intuition that a listener is epistemically better off in virtue of being told by a speaker who is also better off epistemically. Henry's belief that there is a barn is unsafe, whereas his beliefs that there is a cow, there is a tractor and there is a silo respectively are safe. This epistemic difference is matched in the epistemic properties of his son's corresponding testimonial beliefs. In the same way, Eric's belief benefits from Ernie's additional competence, compared to Eric*'s belief in Ernie*'s testimony.

Internalist theories have to deny this. Internalist theories have to say that Henry's son's belief that there is a barn is just as well justified as his belief that there is a cow. Assuming that Henry's son is no more aware of the barn facsimiles than Henry is, Henry's son has no more reason for thinking that his father is

¹¹⁵Goldman actually attributes this example to Carl Ginet.

correct when he says that there's a cow than he does when he says that there's a barn. And since Henry's son has no more reason for thinking that his father is telling the truth when he says that there's a cow than he does when he says that there's a barn, his beliefs are alike with respect to justification, according to internalism.¹¹⁶

This seems unintuitive and this unintuitiveness transfers across to the analogous (internalist) characterisation of DOCTOR and DOCTOR*. The trouble can also be brought out further. Suppose Henry's son later finds out about the barn facsimiles and discovers that his father is unable to distinguish between genuine barns and the facsimiles. It seems that the natural thing for him to do is to revise his confidence in his belief—he should no longer be as confident that he was looking at a barn.

Henry's son should be less confident in the epistemic credentials of his belief after he finds out about the barn facsimiles. But it's more complicated than this. Furthermore, it seems that he ought to think that he previously over-estimated the epistemic credentials of his belief, not that he used to have a belief with impressive epistemic credentials but no longer does. This is crucial. Internalist theories can explain the idea that Henry's son should be less confident in his belief after finding out about the barn facsimiles. This is because Henry's son's reasons used to point in favour of his belief that there is a barn being justified, but it doesn't after he finds out about the barn facsimiles. What internalist theories can't make sense of is the idea that Henry's son is finding out about the justificatory status of his beliefs from *before* discovering the facsimiles.

Goldman identifies similar intuitions about Henry's epistemic status. When we're told about the presence of the facsimiles and Henry's inability to discriminate between genuine barns and facsimiles, our intuition isn't that Henry had knowledge that he now lacks, but that he never had such knowledge in the first place. We might have thought that he did, but we subsequently realise that we were mistaken. Since we feel this way about Henry's perceptual belief, it seems natural to think that something similar is true of Henry's son's testimonial belief. The cost of this intuition, however, is that the question of the epistemic character of beliefs—perceptual or testimonial—depends on factors external to the agent, *contra* internalist claims. This is because the intuition is that Henry's son's belief doesn't change in justificatory status; all that changes is his awareness of his justification.

The naturalness of these intuitions about Henry and his son in the case of the barn facsimile brings out the naturalness of an externalist account of the cases

¹¹⁶If there is a worry about Henry's son being too young to grasp and use reasons, then we can run an analogue of the case in which Henry's son is replaced by a blind adult and Henry is still describing the landscape for the adult's edification.

concerning Eric and Eric*. Supposing that both Eric* and Ernie* find out that there is a condition β that is sufficiently similar to condition α such that Ernie* is unable to distinguish between the two conditions. It would seem as though, in the same way that both Henry and his son ought to revise their confidence in their original judgements in the barn case, Eric* and Ernie* ought to revise their confidence in their original beliefs in the DOCTOR and DOCTOR* cases.

Drawing these points together, then, it seems that there's an intuitive case to be made for an externalist characterisation of Eric's and Eric*'s respective epistemic statuses. In the same way that making the full facts of the case of the barn facsimiles available to the individuals involved in the case Goldman discusses should cause them both to realise that they in fact lacked justification not merely that they had justification that they now lack, it seems intuitive that revealing the facts of the case to Eric* and Ernie* should cause them to question whether they have justification for thinking that Eric* has condition α . The result is that, before they find out the full facts of the case, there's an epistemic difference between Eric and Eric*, as (44) claims, despite their being alike internally. Specifically, Eric* seems to be in a worse epistemic position than Eric. This creates a problem for internalist theories, unless they can find a way to reject (43) and argue that there is a corresponding internal difference between Eric and Eric*.

5.4.3 The Difference: Actual or Possible?

So far I've been arguing that there's a set of internalist intuitions about DOCTOR and DOCTOR* that supports an internalist characterisation of the cases, a set of externalist intuitions that supports an externalist characterisation and that there are reasons to prefer the externalist approach. There are, however, moves that an internalist might make to try and accommodate the externalist intuitions within an externalist framework. That is to say, internalists might try and deny (44) whilst trying to make sense of the externalist intuitions rather than denying them outright.

The general strategy for doing this involves claiming that, whilst there is no *actual* epistemic difference between Eric and Eric*, there is a merely *possible* difference. Specifically, the idea is that the fact that Ernie has an additional competence that Ernie* *could* make a difference between Eric and Eric* if it were reflectively accessible to them, but it doesn't *actually* make a difference to them because it's outside the scope of what's reflectively accessible to them. This means that we get a characterisation that's internalist, in that it denies that there's any actual epistemic difference between Eric and Eric*, as (44) states, but at the same time isn't entirely insensitive to the externalist thought, since it allows for a merely

possible difference between Eric and Eric*.

According to this response, there is a possible difference between Eric and Eric* because there is something that Eric could be aware of that would enhance his justificatory status. Ernie's additional competence isn't something that Eric *couldn't* be aware of. So there's a possible justification available to Eric that isn't available to Eric* (since Ernie* doesn't have the relevant competence). And this possible justification is sensitive to exactly the features that transmission theorists think an epistemic difference should be sensitive to. It's sensitive to the difference in competence between Ernie and Ernie*.

In this way, internalists might seek to respond to the argument against an internalist reading of DOCTOR and DOCTOR* with a move that is not simply just a reassertion of internalist principles from 5.3 and 5.4. I think, however, that there's reason to doubt that this internalist response really does respect the externalist intuition in the way that it appears to. Ultimately, I think that this response *is* just a reassertion of internalist principles notwithstanding.

The claim that the epistemic difference between Eric and Eric* is a merely possible difference doesn't adequately track the externalist intuition. The internalist claim that there's a merely possible epistemic difference between Eric and Eric* amounts to the claim that, actually, they are alike. And the externalist intuition is that, actually, they are not alike. The externalist intuition in the case of Henry's son is that it's actually the case that his belief that there is a cow is justified where his belief that there is a barn isn't. It's not supposed to simply be the case that Henry's son's belief that there is a cow *could* be different to his belief that there is a barn; it's that it actually is the case. The idea that the epistemic difference is merely possible is both crucial to the internalist characterisation and at odds with the externalist claim.

Seeking to deny (44) by appealing to a merely possible epistemic difference between Eric and Eric* is a strategy available to internalist theories. It isn't, however, a way of accommodating the externalist intuition within an internalist framework. It's an important part of the externalist intuition that Eric is *actually* better off epistemically than Eric*. The result is that the internalist strategy of seeking to deny (44) by claiming that the fact that Eric is unaware of Ernie's competences means that Eric and Eric* are actually alike offers nothing that isn't also offered by the previous strategies.

5.5 Motivating the Internal Similarity

Thus far, I've been arguing that the prospects for denying (44) aren't good. Internalist theories thus need to deny (43). On the face of it, this looks difficult for

internalist theories, because they also want to maintain that the individuals in the cases involved in the New Evil Demon Argument are internally alike. Nonetheless, there are differences between the individuals involved in the New Evil Demon Argument cases and the individuals involved in DOCTOR and DOCTOR*. It is on these grounds that I suggested in 5.4.1 that internalist intuitions about individuals in the New Evil Demon cases exert no pressure towards an internalist characterisation of DOCTOR and DOCTOR*.

In the rest of this chapter, I'll consider the options for internalist theories seeking to deny (43). Denying (43) but accepting (44) involves admitting that there is an epistemic difference between Eric and Eric*, but arguing that this is underpinned by a corresponding epistemic difference. If this can be achieved, then rescues internalism. The first strategy I'll consider involves arguing that Eric and Eric* are internally different because Eric* has a false belief and Eric doesn't. The second strategy involves arguing that they aren't internally like because there's a difference in their reflectively accessible reasons to wit: Eric*'s reasons are misleading, where Eric's aren't.

5.5.1 False Beliefs

The first strategy for denying (43) involves the following claim:

- (48) Eric* has a false belief about Ernie* that Eric doesn't have about Ernie.

The idea is that, in virtue of one of them having a false belief about his doctor that the other doesn't have, Eric and Eric* aren't alike internally, because their beliefs about their doctors count as internal and they aren't alike in this sense. So this claim, if it can be motivated, provides a ground for denying (43). Obviously, the question is whether or not it *can* be motivated. I don't think that it can. Or, at any rate, the case can be set up so that it's false.

An obvious question at this point is: *what is the false belief that Eric* has about Ernie* that Eric doesn't have about Ernie?* There are various candidates, but I don't think that any of them are plausible. Here's one candidate:

- (49) Ernie/Ernie* is able to distinguish between condition α and condition β .¹¹⁷

This would certainly give the desired internalist result, in that it's something that's clearly true in the case of Ernie but not in the case of Ernie*. The trouble is, however, that if this is what's supposed to make the difference between Eric

¹¹⁷Obviously, the idea is that Eric believes this about Ernie and Eric* believes it about Ernie*.

and Eric*, we can easily construct an analogue of the case with the added stipulation that Eric and Eric* don't believe anything this specific. Their beliefs about their doctors just aren't fine-grained enough to include the belief that they can distinguish specifically between condition α and condition β . And this needn't be implausible, either in the case of DOCTOR and DOCTOR* or in everyday life.

Suppose that condition β is an extremely rare condition. It's sufficiently rare that neither Eric nor Eric*, who aren't medically trained, have even heard of it. It therefore can't plausibly be the case that Eric and Eric* believe (49) because they have no beliefs at all about condition β . More generally, it seems implausible to think that listeners always have such fine-grained beliefs about the competences of speakers. It's thus not clear that we can't construct a case in which the listeners don't have such fine-grained beliefs about the competences of the people speaking to them. All we need is an expert speaker and a listener with suitably unsophisticated knowledge of the relevant subject. So (49) isn't a plausible account of the false belief that Eric* has that Eric lacks.

Nonetheless, one might offer the following as an account of the relevant belief:

(50) Ernie/Ernie* is competent at diagnosing condition α .

One might think that (50), unlike (49), is general enough to be plausible. Since Ernie and Ernie* are both doctors and both Eric and Eric* know this, it seems that Eric and Eric* might well be competent at diagnosing conditions and since each of them is reporting that the patient has condition α and condition α is a relatively common condition, it seems plausible to think that (50) might be an acceptable account of what Eric and Eric* respectively believe.

The trouble is, however, is that if (50) is the correct account of what Eric and Eric* believe, then it's not so clear that Eric* has a false belief that Eric lacks. Put simply, it's far from clear, given the details of the case, that Ernie* *isn't* a competent doctor when it comes to diagnosing condition α . It depends on what being competent amounts to.

It might, for all the case says, be the case that Ernie* is actually really quite competent at diagnosing condition α . It might well be that, even though Ernie* isn't able to distinguish between condition α by and condition β , there's still a sense in which he might well be competent at diagnosing condition α . Suppose that, Ernie*'s inability to distinguish between condition α by and condition β notwithstanding, he is capable of distinguishing between a patient with condition α and a patient with condition γ , between a patient with condition α and a patient with condition δ , between a patient with condition α and a patient with condition ε and between a patient with condition α a patient with condition ζ . In virtue of all of these diagnostic competences, one might well think that there

is a genuine sense in which Ernie* *is* capable at diagnosing condition α . Ernie* is therefore capable for distinguishing between a patient with condition α and patients with a lot of other conditions.

The same is true if the following is supposed to be an account of what Eric and Eric* believe:

- (50*) Ernie/Ernie* is able to tell the difference between the condition he diagnoses me as having and other conditions that exhibit superficially similar symptoms.

Whilst (50*) obscures the problem, it doesn't deal with it. Either (50*) includes that Ernie* can distinguish between condition α and condition β , in which case it's just not plausible that listeners generally will have beliefs that are this specific, or else it doesn't, in which case it's just not clear that Eric* has a false belief about Ernie*.

The result is that it's far from clear that, if Eric and Eric* both believe (50) that one of them has a false belief that can motivate the denial of (43). Ernie and Ernie* might well both be competent. More generally, there's a dilemma for an internalist seeking to argue that Eric* has a false belief that Eric doesn't. On the one hand, the belief needs to be relatively specific, in order to accommodate the specific difference in competence between Ernie and Ernie* and speakers more generally. On the other hand, the more specific the belief in question is, the more implausible it becomes that Eric and Eric*, or listeners more generally, actually have it. So while a difference in terms of belief might be the kind of thing that internalist theories would want to appeal to, it's not clear that there's obviously such a difference to be identified, either in DOCTOR and DOCTOR* or more generally.

5.5.2 Misleading Evidence

A difference in terms of evidence, understood as reflectively accessible reasons, might be the kind of difference that could motivate the denial of (43). So one might think that arguing that the difference between Ernie and Ernie* generates a difference between Eric's evidence and Eric*'s evidence is the kind of strategy internalist theories might want to pursue. This would be sensitive to the kind of things motivating the intuitive epistemic difference. The next thing to wonder about is what this difference in Eric's evidence and Eric*'s evidence amounts to. The natural claim is the following:

- (51) Eric*'s evidence is misleading, where Eric's is not.

If we endorse (51), then one might think that this gives us a way of endorsing (43). Eric and Eric* aren't alike with respect to reasons because one of them has

a set of reasons that is misleading, where the other doesn't. Since the difference between Eric's reasons and Eric*'s reasons comes directly from the fact that Ernie can distinguish between condition α and condition β , it seems that the difference between Eric's reasons and Eric*'s reasons is sensitive to exactly the kinds of things that motivate the intuitive difference between them in epistemic terms. On the face of it, we have a difference that is both reflectively accessible (and therefore internal) and sensitive to the difference in competence between Ernie and Ernie*.

Nonetheless, there is a problem with this strategy. A useful slogan for the problem is: *the evidence is internal, but the difference in the evidence isn't*. The trouble is that, contrary to initial appearances, appealing to a difference in terms of misleading evidence isn't a strategy that's available to internalist theories. Internalists think that the facts that are relevant to an individual's justification are exclusively those that are internal to her, which are those that she has reflective access to. The result is that, for (51) to be appropriately internal to the listeners, it must be that (51) is reflectively accessible to them. And it simply isn't the case that (51) is reflectively accessible to either listener. Eric doesn't have reflective access to the fact that his justification isn't misleading and Eric* doesn't have reflective access to the fact that his justification is misleading.¹¹⁸ This means that (51) can't be the kind of difference that internalist theories are able to use in making a case against (43).

This point can be brought out more forcefully. Suppose, for *reductio* that (51) is the kind of thing that is reflectively accessible to Eric and Eric*. This means that, assuming he is capable of competent deductions, Eric is able to find out that Ernie is capable of distinguishing between condition α and condition β just by reasoning from his own evidence. The reason that Eric*'s evidence is supposed to be misleading is that Ernie* can't distinguish between condition α and condition β . If the fact that Eric's evidence isn't misleading in this way is reflectively accessible to him, it means that Eric can figure out that Ernie *can* distinguish between condition α and condition β just by considering his own evidence. Eric can consider his evidence, note that, if Ernie were unable to distinguish between condition α and condition β , then his (Eric's) evidence would be misleading, note that his evidence is *not* misleading and thus infer that Ernie *is* in fact capable of distinguishing between condition α and condition β .

In the same way, if the fact that his evidence is misleading is reflectively accessible to him, then Eric* should be able to figure out that Ernie* isn't able to distinguish between condition α and condition β just by considering his own evidence. The fact that Ernie* isn't able to distinguish between condition α and

¹¹⁸Cf. McDowell (1994b).

condition β follows from the fact that Eric*'s evidence is misleading and this fact is supposed to be reflectively accessible to Eric*. The result is that, just by considering his own evidence, Eric* can tell that Ernie* isn't able to distinguish between condition α and condition β .

On the face of it, this seems intolerable. The first problem is that it generates a McKinsey-style objection, according to which we can come to know things that are external to us by pure reflection.¹¹⁹ Pritchard (2012b) argues that something similar to this is unproblematic in cases of ordinary visual perception, but whatever we want to say about perceptual knowledge, it certainly doesn't seem to be true about testimony that we can reflectively tell when our evidence is misleading us. This just fails to respect the phenomenology of testimony.¹²⁰ The result is that it doesn't seem like (51) is the kind of internal difference that an internalist theory can appeal to in order to explain the intuitive epistemic difference between Eric and Eric* because it doesn't seem that (51) is a difference that's internal in the sense of 'internal' that internalist theories are interested in.

A further point that's worth noting is that there's additional pressure on internalist theories to claim that (51) isn't something that's internal in the correct sense. This comes from internalist discussions of the New Evil Demon Argument, as discussed in 5.4. Recall that the internalist interpretation of the New Evil Demon Argument holds that I and my envatted counterpart are alike both internally and with respect to justification. It's crucial to the internalist interpretation of the New Evil Demon cases I and my envatted counterpart *are* alike with respect to reasons.

If I and my envatted counterpart are alike internally, then it must be true that facts about whether or not our evidence is misleading cannot be part of what's internal to us. If anyone is ever in a case of having misleading evidence, then my envatted counterpart is. And if anyone is ever in a case of having evidence that isn't misleading, then I am (in the case at the centre of the New Evil Demon Argument). But since it's crucial to the New Evil Demon Argument that there *isn't* an internal difference between my envatted counterpart and I, the fact that one of us is in possession of a set of reasons that are misleading and the other isn't can't be an internal difference. I think that this is as it should be. But it's a problem for the internalist response that goes through (51).

Ultimately, the strategy of trying to explain the internal difference in terms of a difference between Eric's evidence and Eric*'s misleading evidence is problematic, despite its *prima facie* appeal. The fact that Eric*'s evidence is misleading where Eric's is not is a fact about their evidence, but it's not contained *within* their evidence. As observed above, their evidence might be internal to them, but the

¹¹⁹See McKinsey (1991).

¹²⁰Faulkner (2011) argues this against McDowell (1994b).

fact that there's a difference in their evidence isn't. And there's good reason to think that this difference in their evidence isn't internal to them. This comes from the observation that claiming that it's reflectively accessible to them has highly unintuitive McKinsey-style consequences and also from the observation that the New Evil Demon Argument is committed to the denial of this claim.

5.6 Summary: The Problem With Internalist Theories

I've been arguing that there's a type of justification from testimony that internalist theories can't accommodate. It's intuitive that there's a type of justification available to Eric and Eric* that opens up the possibility of them being epistemically different. And internalist theories have no way of making sense of this. Internalist theories make good sense of one type of justification from testimony, but they can't give an intuitively adequate characterisation of *all* justification from testimony.

This shows that a theory of justification from testimony needs to allow that a listener's belief in a speaker's testimony can be justified by factors beyond those that are reflectively accessible to her. Transmission theories are able to give a neat account of the intuitions that motivated this. It's exactly because Ernie has justification that Ernie* doesn't that it's intuitive that Eric's justification outstrips Eric*'s. Since transmission is incompatible with internalism, however, the intuitiveness of transmission is a problem for internalist theories.

In seeking to respond to the intuitive problem, internalist theories can take one of two approaches. The first involves trying to deny that Eric and Eric* are internally alike. This, however, seems problematic because Eric and Eric* are similar to the individuals in the New Evil Demon Argument and these are stipulated by internalist theorists as internally alike. The second involves trying to claim that they're alike with respect to justification. This is also problematic, however, because it denies an important intuition about justification from testimony. The result is that internalist theories that offer a genuine alternative to transmission face an intuitive problem.

Chapter 6

Reliability Theories

6.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I argued against internalist theories by offering a testimonial situation in which internally alike listeners might be different with respect to justification. This motivated thinking of justification from testimony in externalist terms. More accurately, it motivated thinking of justification from testimony in externalist terms *at least sometimes*. One way of being an externalist about testimony is by endorsing transmission, but it isn't the only way. Another way involves thinking of justification from testimony as a matter of the reliability of processes. Reliability theories offer a genuine alternative to transmission theories and are also set within an externalist framework.

According to reliability theories, a listener's justification for her belief in a speaker's testimony is a matter of the reliability of the process by which she formed her belief. Like internalist theories, reliability theories are closely connected with a theory of justification in general. Thus Goldman states that '[a] fourth theory of justification that could underwrite testimonial belief without an inductive basis is *reliabilism* [...] In its simplest form, justificational reliabilism says that a belief is justified if and only if it is produced (and/or sustained) by a reliable belief-forming process or sequence of processes' (Goldman, 1999, p. 129). Reliability theories of justification from testimony come from applying what Goldman calls 'justificational reliabilism' about justification in general to the domain of testimony. Different reliability theories of justification from testimony seek to do this in different ways.

In this chapter, I begin by setting out and developing the basic idea behind reliability theories of justification in general. With an understanding of reliability and reliability theories in hand, I turn to consider different applications of the

basic idea behind reliability theories to the domain of testimony. One can individuate different reliability theories of justification from testimony according to how they characterise the process relevant to justification from testimony. The idea here is thus to give a taxonomy of reliability theories and the considerations that can be brought to bear in favour of them, before arguing in the next chapter that reliability theories do not give a philosophically satisfying framework within which to think about justification from testimony.

6.2 Reliability Theories and Reliability

As observed above, the basic idea behind reliability theories of justification in general is that justification is a matter of reliability and that the *primary* bearers of reliability are processes, rather than beliefs.¹²¹ Beliefs are reliable (in the sense in question) in virtue of *being reliably formed*. This, however, is just a matter of reliable processes. So belief reliability is explained in terms of the more fundamental notion of process reliability. One way of thinking about reliability theories of justification is in terms of necessary and sufficient conditions for a belief being justified. In this spirit, the central idea behind reliability theories can be expressed in the following:

(RNS) An individual's belief that p is justified if and only if the process by which the individual came to form the belief that p is one that reliably produces true beliefs.

This claim is the conjunction of the following two claims:

(RN) An individual's belief that p is justified only if the process by which the individual came to form the belief that p is one that reliably produces true beliefs.

And

¹²¹Why are processes rather than the beliefs the bearers of reliability? Reliability is determined by how easily something might have been false. This is the reason that processes rather than beliefs are the relevant. Consider a case from Kripke (2013) where people live in an environment with one real barn and various barn facsimiles. Tired of mixing them up, they paint the real barn red. One day, Henry is driving through the countryside with his son and sees that the red barn is on fire, whilst being ignorant of the facsimiles. Henry thus forms the belief that the red barn is on fire. It seems that Henry's belief is reliable in that it might not easily have been false—had a facsimile been on fire, Henry wouldn't have believed that the red barn was on fire. The result is that Henry's belief is in a sense reliable, but this has nothing to do with the process by which he formed his belief, which is some sort of perceptual process and everything to do with the content of his belief. More generally, if the content of the belief was relevant to assessments of the belief's reliability, one might think that a belief in a necessary proposition would be automatically justified. Reliability theories thus hold that the correct subject for an epistemic assessment of an individual's beliefs is the process by which it was formed.

(RS) If the process by which an individual came to form the belief that p is one that reliably produces true beliefs, then the individual's belief that p is justified.

Associating (RS) with reliability theories requires caution. The majority of reliability theorists think that, as stated, (RS) is strictly and literally false.¹²² Rather, they tend to hold that the reliability of the relevant process is sufficient *in certain circumstances*. Nonetheless, the idea behind reliability theories is that justification is a matter of the reliability of the process through which the belief was formed.

The kind of thing that gets in the way of an individual's belief that p being justified even though it was reliably formed might be the fact that there is another reliable process that the individual *could* have used that would have resulted in her believing that $\neg p$.¹²³ Another thing that might prevent the individual's belief being justified might be the fact that the individual has various reasons for thinking that the process by which she formed her belief is in fact *not* a reliable one. Thus Goldman states that 'a sophisticated form of reliabilism would also accommodate "defeating" evidence, so that if the hearer has evidence *against* a testifier's credibility, she is not justified in believing that testifier's report' (Goldman, 1999, p. 130).

This is why it is useful to think of reliability theories as theories of the *nature* of justification (whether testimonial or in general) rather than in terms of necessary and sufficient conditions. Whilst necessary and sufficient conditions are useful in illustrating what reliability theories are about, it's important to keep the focus on the *nature* of justification from testimony. Reliability theories don't merely want to say that reliability is necessary and sufficient for justified belief. Rather, they want to say that an increase in reliability makes for an increase in justification. Treating reliability theories as theories of the nature of justification thus makes sense of the idea that beliefs are not merely justified or not depending on *whether or not* the relevant process is reliable, but are justified *to the degree to which* the relevant process is reliable. The result is that I think that it is best to conceive of reliability theories in terms of the following thesis:

(R) An individual's justification for her belief that p is exclusively a matter of reliability of the process by which she formed her belief that p .

As with the basic idea behind internalist theories of justification from testimony, reliability theories of testimonial justification are situated against a background framework for thinking about justification. Hence, the application of (R) to the domain of testimony yields the following claim, which is constitutive of reliability theories:

¹²²For a dissenting voice, see Audi (1995).

¹²³Goldman (1979).

(TR) An individual's justification for her belief in a speaker's testimony that p is a matter of the reliability of the testimonial process involved in the production of the listener's belief that p .

As with internalist theories and (TI), there are various ways that reliability theories might spell out (TR). These are the subject of the later parts of this chapter. Before moving to discuss particular reliability theories in more detail, it is first important to get the basic idea of reliability, as involved in (R), more closely in view.

The reliability of a process is a matter of how often it yields beliefs that are true rather than false. The way to understand this is in terms of *counterfactuals*. The idea is that there are facts about what outputs a process yields when it's employed in a nearby possible world. This is what makes the difference between a process that is *reliable* and a process that is merely *working*. A reliable process tends to yield more true outputs than false ones when it's employed in various possible worlds. So according to counterfactual reliability theories, a process is reliable insofar as it tends to yield true outputs rather than false ones in near possible worlds.¹²⁴

It's important to be clear that what matters for justification, according to reliability theories, are the facts about the reliability of the process, rather than the individual's evidence or reasons for thinking that the process is reliable. The fact that a process has, in the actual world, previously tended to yield true outputs rather than false ones might well be evidence that the process is reliable. By itself, however, this isn't enough to make the process reliable.

William Alston illustrates this point with the following observation:

An unreliable procedure might have chanced to work well on the few occasions on which it was actually employed. Anyone can get lucky! If there have only been five crystal-ball readings all of which just happened to be correct, that wouldn't make reading a crystal ball a reliable way of forming beliefs; it might still have a poor record in the long haul. Indeed, we can't identify reliability with a favorable record over all past, present and future employments. A practice or instrument that is never employed might be quite reliable in that it *would* yield mostly true beliefs in the long run. Thus to call something reliable is to speak about the kind of record it *would* pile up over a suitable number and variety of employments (Alston, 1996, pp. 8-9).¹²⁵

¹²⁴Papineau (1992) offers a motivation for the claim that, if justification is to be understood in terms of reliability, then reliability must be understood in counterfactual terms.

¹²⁵See also David Papineau (1992).

Reliability theories are thus externalist. They want to keep apart the facts that determine the reliability of a process and the evidence we might use to find out about the reliability of a process. Reliability, as reliability theories conceive of it, isn't a matter of evidence, but a matter of objective facts. As Alston goes on to observe: '[a]n actual track record is crucial evidence for judgments of reliability just to the extent that it is a good *indication* of that' (Alston, 1996, p. 9). Importantly, though, this is all that a track record is, as far as reliability theorists are concerned. Unlike internalist theories, reliability theories dispute that there's any necessary connection between a track record of success and justification. It's thus important not to confuse factors indicative of reliability that might come from statistical success in the actual world with the factors constitutive of reliability, which are counterfactual considerations that might be entirely opaque to the epistemic subject.¹²⁶

6.3 Goldman's (General) Reliability Theory

That's the basic idea behind (R). With this in hand, we can consider the application of (R) to the domain of testimony. Goldman offers an initial way into the subject. In Goldman's words:

For a testimonial belief to be justified it suffices that the general process of accepting the reports of others mostly yields truths [...] credulity achieves reliability if and only if it is exercised in an environment in which speakers' reports are generally true. If this condition is satisfied, then the (simple) reliabilist theory of justification assigns the status of "justified" to testimonial beliefs, whether or not believers have an inductive basis for regarding testifiers' reports as reliable. (Goldman, 1999, p. 129-130).

Applying (R) to the domain of testimony involves identifying the process relevant to justification from testimony. Goldman identifies the relevant process as one of *believing what speakers say*. Justification from testimony is thus a matter of this process being reliable. This involves spelling out (TR) in the following form:

(GR) An individual's justification for her belief in a speaker's testimony that *p* is a matter of the reliability of the process of believing what speakers say.

Or alternatively:

¹²⁶Plausibly, this has a dual effect. It gets reliability theories away from the problem of the criterion, but it leaves them open to the *problem of easy knowledge*. See Cohen (2002), van Cleve (2003) and Jonathan Vogel (2000).

- (GR*) An individual's justification for her belief in a speaker's testimony that p is a matter of the reliability of the process of believing what speakers in the local environment say.

Goldman's theory is the analogue of the direct internalist theory described in 4.5.1. Where the direct internalist theory held that justification from testimony is a matter of a listener's evidence for thinking that testimony is generally true, the reliability theory that Goldman describes here claims that justification from testimony is a matter of testimony generally being true.

The similarities between (GR) and the direct internalist theory mean that (GR) faces a similar problem. The problem with the direct internalist theory was that it was unable to accommodate the thought that the fact that a listener has knowledge about a particular speaker's epistemic competence and this might make a difference to the listener's epistemic status. More generally, the trouble was that direct internalism couldn't make sense of how specific facts could be relevant to justification.

There are similar problems for (GR) though the externalist nature of (GR) means that the problem needs to be expressed in a different way. The problem is that specific matters about a conversation seem intuitively relevant to the justification the listener can acquire. A modified version of the very first case in 1.1 brings this out. Suppose a tourist in an unfamiliar city wants to know where the landmark is and thus asks the nearest bystander. The bystander happens to be a local who knows where the landmark is, but there are various other bystanders who do not know where the landmark is and would have told the individual something false.¹²⁷

Since the listener's belief is formed through exercising credulity, the reliability (and thus the justification) of her belief depends on whether or not it is exercised in an environment in which speakers' reports are generally true. This is manifestly not the case in this example, since *ex hypothesi* the tourist selects the only speaker who would have told her the truth. By the lights of the simple reliability theory that Goldman outlines, the listener's belief is thus not justified.¹²⁸

One might think, however, that there's something positive to be said about the tourist's belief, which is missed by this verdict. Furthermore, it's something that reliability theories should want to accommodate. As a matter of fact, the tourist does select a speaker who would reliably tell her the truth. Whilst the environment is one in which the speaker wouldn't easily have said something false. This means that there's a way of thinking about the process, according to

¹²⁷The case here is an analogue of Gilbert Harman's (1973) case where an individual happens to pick up a newspaper that reliably reported a fact rather than one of the many nearby newspapers containing misleading reports. Jonathan Adler (1996) applies this case to testimony.

¹²⁸Cf. Greco (2012).

which it *is* reliable. And so reliability theories should want to think that there's something going for this belief, on the level of justification¹²⁹ There's a sense in which it's the product of a reliable process. This means that (GR) isn't an adequate account of (TR), even if one accepts (R).

Rejecting (GR) on these grounds requires the following claim:

- (52) Particular matters of fact can determine the epistemic character of a testimonial exchange.

Thus far, I've largely just asserted that (52) is intuitive. One might wonder whether reliability theories ought to accept this. I think that they should. This can be brought out by considering a situation involving two speakers and two listeners that makes trouble for (GR*). Speaker A tells listener B that *p* and does so because she knows that *p* and wishes to bring B to know this as well. On the other side of the room, speaker A* tells listener B* that *p* and does so because she believes that *p* but her belief that *p* is merely the product of lucky guesswork. In this situation, both of the speakers are in the same local (and therefore global) environment. Intuitively, I think that the following is true:

- (53) B is in a better position than B*.

Furthermore, the intuition in (53) is one that reliability theories should want to claim. The reason that the reliability of processes is important to reliability theories is because reliable processes assist us in achieving truth and avoiding error. And there's a genuine sense in which B does better in terms of achieving truth and avoiding error than B*. Forming beliefs through believing B's testimony is more reliable because B is expressing knowledge, where B* is expressing speculation. Greco (2012) expresses this idea. So the idea is that (53) provides both a counterexample to (GR*) and motivation for (52). And since (GR) denies (52), there's a problem for (GR). Reliability theories, like internalist theories, need to be sensitive to particular matters of fact. With this observation in hand, we can move on to thinking about the various other ways in which one might spell out (TR).

6.4 Comprehension Processes

The above discussion shows that the plausibility of reliability theories, like internalist theories, depends on their assessments (of reliability in the case of reliability theories) being sensitive to particular facts about the particular conversation and the participants involved. One such theory could hold that the relevant

¹²⁹One way of achieving this involves characterising the case as a Gettier case.

processes are the comprehension processes situated in the listener and that an epistemic assessment of the listener's belief thus depends on the reliability of these comprehension processes. The resulting theory is an externalist analogue of the internalist theory described by Fricker (1994) and is encapsulated in the following claim:¹³⁰

(CR) The processes relevant to a listener's justification are the comprehension processes situated within the listener.

An initial point in favour of the comprehension theory given in (CR) comes from the thought that it seems entirely correct that the listener must do *some* cognitive processing in order to form a justified belief. For one thing, the possibility of a listener forming a justified belief in a speaker's testimony surely depends on the listener comprehending the speaker's testimony.¹³¹ The fact that the listener's belief is unquestionably formed through some processes situated within the listener makes these processes a natural starting point for the discussion of reliability theories.

Here's one way of thinking about comprehension processes: comprehending a speaker's testimony involves recognising that it is a particular type of testimony; an assertion, a declaration, a suggestion or something like that and also recognising that it has a particular propositional content. This is the foundation of Graham's (2010) account of comprehension. Graham's account identifies two distinct types of comprehension. The first is comprehension *neat*. This kind of comprehension is simply a listener recognising the type of testimony produced by a speaker as well as the testimony's propositional content. There is a sense in which the process of comprehension neat might be reliable. It is the sense described above by Goldman in reference to the reliability of credulity. Applying this to (CR) yields the following:

(CR*) The process relevant to a listener's justification is the process of comprehension neat.

According to reliability theories of justification in general, the justification that an individual's belief enjoys is a matter of the reliability of the process by which it was formed. Reliability theories paradigmatically want to allow that a competent deduction can yield justified belief, but the process of deduction is not, by itself a reliable one. If you form a belief through competent deduction, the fact about how easily you might have formed a false belief obviously depends on the premises from which you inferred. If you competently deduce something from

¹³⁰Faulkner (2011) identifies this as Fricker's theory.

¹³¹This is the kind of processing that C.A.J. Coady (1992) and Donald Davidson (1973) consider in the project of radical interpretation. See also Jack (1994).

premises that you know to be true, then you wouldn't easily go wrong and the process you have used is reliable. Alternatively, if you competently deduce something from premises that are mere guesswork or speculation, then it seems that you might easily form a false belief. The point is that the reliability of deduction depends on the premises from which the conclusion is deduced.

Goldman (1979) thus draws a distinction between *belief-dependent processes* and *belief-independent processes*. Goldman characterises deductive reasoning as a belief-dependent process, since it reliably yields true beliefs when the beliefs that form the premises are known, but when the beliefs that form the premises are mere speculation, it doesn't.

Corresponding to the distinction between belief-dependent processes and belief-independent processes is a distinction between processes that are *conditionally reliable* and processes that are *unconditionally reliable*. Conditional reliability is associated with belief-dependent processes like competent deduction. As observed above, deduction is reliable given a certain quality of premise. Put another way, the reliability of deduction is conditional on the beliefs that the individual infers from. By contrast, forming beliefs through perception doesn't depend on background beliefs for its reliability. The idea is that your perceptual faculties are as reliable as they are regardless of your background beliefs about them. Perception is thus a belief-independent process and (where reliable) is unconditionally reliable.

In the same way that deduction is conditionally reliable, comprehension neat is conditionally reliable given a certain quality of testimonial input. In the same way that Goldman observes that credulity can be a reliable way of forming beliefs in a certain local environment, employing the process of comprehension neat can be reliable given certain facts about the speaker's testimony. Whilst one can make sense of the idea that comprehension neat could be a reliable process in this way, this type of comprehension and this type of reliability aren't what reliability theories endorsing (CR) have in mind.

The reason is that (CR*) is only a weak endorsement of (CR). Whilst it's true that the relevant process is comprehension, which takes place in the listener, the reliability of this process can only be analysed by considering the testimony, which involves considering factors situated outside the listener. So even though (CR*) is an endorsement of the letter of (CR), the fact that the reliability of the process is determined by the speaker's testimony means that (CR*) is only a weak endorsement of (CR). The real action is elsewhere. There's a more substantive version of (CR) available, though, which preserves the *individualist* commitment to the thought that the relevant processes are distinctively those associated with the listener.

Graham also identifies *comprehension-with-filtering* as a comprehension process. This process, Graham argues, reliably yields true beliefs and confers epistemic support on the beliefs it yields. Graham argues that comprehension-with-filtering is unconditionally reliable and underpins a listener's entitlement to believe what people say.¹³² The way to understand (CR) is therefore in terms of comprehension-with-filtering. This can be encapsulated in the following:

(CR**) The process relevant to a listener's justification is comprehension-with-filtering.

Graham identifies several varieties of filtering. One involves sensitivity to statements that are obviously false in virtue of their content, for example a speaker's assertion that she once travelled faster than the speed of light. A more sophisticated form of this sensitivity involves judging how well the statement coheres with one's existing beliefs. In this way, a listener might consider a speaker's statement that she won't be going to the party because she has an assignment due the following week against her background beliefs about when the speaker's assignment is due in. Another variety of filtering involves considering how confidently the statement is asserted.¹³³ The fact that a speaker said that she knew how to set the department alarm, but said it with little confidence might make a listener particularly alert to the possibility that she has in fact forgotten how to do so. Comprehension-with-filtering thus renders a listener sensitive to certain counter-considerations (Graham, 2010, pp. 152-153). In this way, it is thought, it amounts to an unconditionally reliable process.

It's important to note that Graham *doesn't* endorse the comprehension theory given in (CR**). According to Graham's theory, the epistemic support that comprehension-with-filtering provides is both *prima facie* and *pro tanto* (Graham, 2010, pp. 149-150). In terms of the distinction drawn in 1.4 between claims about the nature of justification from testimony and claims about the scope of justification from testimony, the support that comprehension-with-filtering confers concerns the *scope* of justification from testimony. The reliability of this process serves to put a listener in touch with the factors that justification from testimony consists in. It is not, itself, what justification from testimony is a matter of, according to Graham's theory.¹³⁴ Furthermore, Graham (2006b) argues that the

¹³²Graham follows Burge in understanding an entitlement as an epistemic support for an individual's belief that doesn't depend on the individual being aware of it.

¹³³Filtering in this case involves sensitivity to the same cues that Fricker (1994) thinks provide a listener with a reason for thinking that the speaker's testimony is true.

¹³⁴According to Graham's theory, a listener's belief is supported by justification from testimony only if the listener's internal cognitive state of taking the speaker to have said that *p* carries the information that *p*. See Graham (2000b; 2006a). Carrying the information that *p* is a technical notion, the examination of which would lead us too far astray from our focus here. Suffice to say, however that the process internal to the listener being one that reliably yields true beliefs is not all

fact that the epistemic support the process confers is both *prima facie* and *pro tanto* means that, even if there are no considerations against it, it might fail to translate into full justification. Nonetheless, it's easy to see how Graham's discussion provides the tools for understanding how an endorsement of (CR**) might go.¹³⁵

As observed in 4.5.3 there's empirical evidence against the idea that listeners regularly employ an unconditionally reliable process of comprehension-with-filtering. Nonetheless, Graham provides empirical support for the claim that listeners *do* employ such a process. Graham's argument begins with the observation that a testimonial exchange is essentially a practical matter. It is a practical matter in that speakers enter into conversations with a variety of practical interests in mind, including the intention of inducing beliefs in the listener.¹³⁶

In a similar way, listeners engage in conversations aiming to form true beliefs. Since there's an obvious possibility of these interests conflicting, Graham argues that hearers develop measures against being deceived. Graham bases this on Dan Sperber's (2001) observation that:

[I]f communication has stabilized among humans, it must be that there are ways to calibrate one's confidence in communicated information so as that the expected benefits are greater than the expected costs (Sperber, 2001, p. 406).

These ways of calibrating one's confidence include filtering what speakers say to establish the truth of their testimony. The process of comprehension-with-filtering, Graham suggests plays a dual role. As well as assisting listeners in avoiding the formation of false beliefs, Graham claims that 'filtering not only dampens the possibility of accepting a false report, it also provides an incentive for speakers not to cheat in the first place. For cheaters often get caught [through listeners deploying the process of comprehension-with-filtering]' (Graham, 2010, p. 173).

Graham thus concludes that:

Comprehension-with-filtering may not, as a matter of fact, be as reliable as perception. But for all that, it is still an awfully good way of acquiring information; it is a very reliable guide to the way things are. And the reliability enhancing aspect of filtering explains, at least in

there is to testimonial justification on Graham's theory, since the question of whether or not the listener's internal cognitive state carries the information that *p* depends in part on the testimony she receives.

¹³⁵How far reliability theories can limit the unconditional reliability of comprehension-with-filtering to the scope of justification from testimony is the subject of the next chapter.

¹³⁶Graham takes this point from Coady (1992) and Ruth Millikan (1984). More recently, this point has been taken up by Moran (2005), Hinchman (2005), Faulkner (2011) and McMyler (2011).

part, why we bother to filter what we take others to assert (Graham, 2010, p. 173).

The fact that communication among humans exhibits a degree of stability provides a reason for thinking that listeners generally filter in response to testimony and that this filtering is reliable. If listeners lacked a way of guarding against misleading speakers, then communication would not be as stable as it appears, because speakers and listeners engage in conversations with conflicting interests. Comprehension-with-filtering serves this purpose and also serves to “keep speakers honest” providing them with an incentive to tell the truth in the first place. Graham thus concludes that listeners generally employ a reliable process of comprehension-with-filtering in response to testimony from speakers.

Suppose that Graham’s claim that the process of comprehension-with-filtering does reliably yield true beliefs is correct. Moving from this thought to the comprehension theory given in (CR**) involves abandoning Graham’s claim that the epistemic support that the process yields is merely *prima facie* and *pro tanto*. Ordinarily, reliability theories take it that justification is a matter of a process being reliable. In the spirit of (RNS), one might thus think that the fact that comprehension-with-filtering reliably yields true beliefs means that the beliefs that it yields are justified in a stronger sense than Graham’s claim that their justification is *prima facie* and *pro tanto*. Indeed, one might think that taking (RNS) seriously involves claiming that, given that the process of comprehension-with-filtering is unconditionally reliable, (CR**) follows.

The result is a reliability theory of justification from testimony. According to the resulting theory, the process of comprehension-with-filtering is reliable and as such, beliefs formed through this process are justified assuming that the relevant conditions, such as there being no other process the individual could have used, associated with (RS) are met. Put another way, the listener’s justification is a matter of the comprehension processes she employs.

6.5 The Production of Testimony

In discussing the comprehension theory that (CR*) gives, I noted that comprehension neat might be conditionally reliable given the reliability of the testimony the listener receives. The idea was that if a speaker’s testimony is sufficiently reliable, forming a belief in the speaker’s testimony merely by comprehending what she says might reliably yield a true belief. I suggested, however, that (CR*) was only a weak endorsement of (CR) since the reliability of the comprehension process derives essentially from the speaker’s testimony. This indicates an alternative way of spelling out (TR). One might think that the relevant processes are those

involved in the production of the speaker's testimony, rather than the comprehension processes situated in the listener. This is expressed in the following:

- (PR) The processes relevant to a listener's justification are the processes involved in the production of the speaker's testimony.

Endorsing the production theory given in (PR) moves away from taking the listener's comprehension processes as central to justification from testimony and towards a focus on the processes involved in the production of the speaker's testimony.

6.5.1 Lackey's Arguments

As observed in Chapter 3, Lackey endorses a production theory and thus (PR). Lackey's rejection of transmission theories is driven by the thought that justification from testimony is a matter of the reliability of the speaker's testimony. According to Lackey's theory, the reliability of the speaker's testimony is determined by the processes involved in the production of the testimony. Now, obviously one way for a speaker to produce reliable testimony is for the speaker's testimony to express knowledge, where expressing knowledge involves not merely saying that p when one knows that p but saying that p *because* one knows that p .¹³⁷

It might thus be tempting to think that there's some overlap between the factors that transmission theories associate with testimonial justification and those that Lackey's theory associates with justification from testimony. This distorts the picture, though. For transmission theories, the relevant facts are *epistemic* facts to do with connecting a listener to a speaker's justification for what she says. According to Lackey's theory, the relevant facts are *nomological* facts that render a speaker's statement reliable.

As observed in 3.5, the processes involved in the production of a speaker's testimony might be reliable even when the speaker doesn't say something she knows, or even something she has justification for. Lackey observes that:

[O]f course, often times, it is precisely *because* a speaker is insincere or an incompetent believer that she is an incompetent or unreliable testifier. For instance, if I frequently lie or form inaccurate beliefs, more often than not this will prevent you from acquiring knowledge (justified/warranted belief) on the basis of my testimony. But the reason why you are so prevented is that my insincerity or incompetence has made my *testimony unreliable*... (Lackey, 2008, pp. 74-75).

¹³⁷See Turri (2011b).

The differences between Lackey's reliability theory and transmission theories were the subject of Chapters 2 and 3. Cases such as *CONSISTENT LIAR*, described in 3.8 and 3.9, in which a speaker's cognitive apparatus is such that whenever she sees that p , she comes to believe that $\neg p$ and then is disposed to lie about it and say that p are cases in which a speaker's testimony might be reliable in a way that doesn't appeal to her having justification for what she says.

In a situation such as *CONSISTENT LIAR*, the speaker's testimony is reliable because it is the product of processes that combine to make it the case that the speaker would not easily say something false. The result of the speaker reliably seeing that p when p is the case and reliably believing that $\neg p$ when she sees that p and then reliably deciding to lie and say that p when she believes that $\neg p$ means that the process by which her testimony is formed is a reliable one.

The *CONSISTENT LIAR* case is designed to expose intuitive motivations for the production theory in (PR) over transmission theories. Another central case that Lackey describes is supposed to motivate (PR) over internalist theories. The case is as follows:

NESTED SPEAKER: Fred has known Helen for five years and, during this time, he has acquired excellent epistemic reasons for believing her to be a highly reliable source of information on a wide range of topics. For instance, each time she has made a personal or professional recommendation to Fred, her assessment has proven to be accurate; each time she has reported an incident to Fred, her version of the story has been independently confirmed; each time she has recounted historical information, all of the major historical texts and figures have fully supported her account, and so on. Yesterday, Helen told Fred that Pauline, a close friend of hers, is a highly trustworthy person, especially when it comes to information regarding wild birds. Because of this, Fred unhesitatingly believed Pauline earlier today when she told him that albatrosses, not condors (as is widely believed), have the largest wingspan among wild birds. It turns out that while Helen is an epistemically excellent source of information, she was incorrect on this particular occasion: Pauline is, in fact, a highly incompetent and insincere speaker, especially on the topic of wild birds. Moreover, though Pauline is correct in her report about albatrosses, she came to hold this belief merely on the basis of wishful thinking (in order to make her reading of *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* more compelling) (Lackey, 2008, p. 149).

Lackey claims that the listener's belief in the speaker's testimony isn't justified. On the face of things, this is incompatible with internalist theories. Internal-

ist theories should think that the listener's belief *is* justified, since the listener's belief is based on reflectively accessible reasons for thinking that the speaker's testimony is true. Lackey disputes this, because, the listener's reasons notwithstanding, the speaker's testimony isn't reliably produced. By way of further motivation, Lackey considers three potential lines of response that might be made against this diagnosis.

The first response charges that Lackey's argument simply begs the question. As observed above, internalist theories will dispute the point that the listener's belief is unjustified. Whether or not the intuitions that NESTED SPEAKER seeks to exploit are sufficiently robust might be more controversial than Lackey anticipates. Using such a counterexample to motivate a reliability theory over an internalist theory requires some care and one might think that its success depends on an antecedent commitment to interpreting justification in (at the very least) externalist terms.¹³⁸

In response, Lackey observes that it's generally agreed by defenders of internalist and externalist theories alike that justification is, in some substantive sense, connected to truth. The idea is that this is what's missing in the NESTED SPEAKER example. Lackey thus argues that '[t]he fact that Pauline's testimony doesn't make probable the proposition about albatrosses is thus enough to render Fred's belief unjustified, regardless of whether internalism or externalism is assumed' (Lackey, 2008, p. 152).

The second line of response that Lackey considers is the possibility of internalist theories characterising the case as a Gettier case. Lackey's primary focus is on knowledge rather than justification, which slightly alters the significance of appealing to Gettier cases. Nonetheless, the internalist strategy of characterising NESTED SPEAKER in terms of a Gettier case is analogous to seeking to characterise DOCTOR* in terms of false beliefs, as described in 5.5.1. I think that similar moves can be made to counter this possibility for Lackey's case here.

One might, however, think that there's a sense in which the listener in NESTED SPEAKER *does* have epistemically good reasons for thinking that the speaker's testimony is true. The listener bases her belief in the speaker's testimony on her belief in the following:

(54) The speaker is a reliable testifier.

And since the listener's belief in (54) is the product of believing testimony that she has reason to think reliable and which is in fact reliable, the listener's belief in (54) is thus justified, even according to (PR). Internalist theories might thus

¹³⁸Of course, the case doesn't serve to motivate a reliability theory over competing externalist theories, such as transmission theories, but it's exactly the point that it's not supposed to. Lackey's arguments against transmission operate independently of her arguments against internalist theories.

seek to launch an argument in support of their diagnosis that the listener's belief is justified because the listener's belief is based on her uncontroversially justified belief that the speaker is a reliable testifier.

In response, Lackey disputes the claim that these objectively good reasons are sufficient to render the listener's belief justified. Lackey acknowledges that the listener's reasons are epistemically good. The reason that the listener's belief, in the NESTED SPEAKER case, is not justified, however, is the following:

[B]y other measures of objective likelihood, Fred's positive reasons do not render it likely that Pauline's testimony is true. Fred's belief about the wingspan of albatrosses also belongs to a category that contains beliefs that are or would be mostly false; namely, those beliefs that are supported by Pauline's testimony. Moreover, because Pauline is the direct source of the belief, it is clear that her unreliability is not offset by the excellence of Fred's reasons for believing her. So, although Fred does have excellent positive reasons for believing Pauline's testimony, the belief in question is not justified or warranted (Lackey, 2008, p. 154).

The idea behind Lackey's response to this objection is that the listener's evidence notwithstanding, the speaker's testimony is unreliable. It's thus supposed to be intuitive that, even though the listener might be blameless and responsible in believing what the speaker says, his belief lacks justification because the source of the belief—the speaker's testimony—is unreliable. Lackey thus contends, as I did in Chapter 5, that to align justification from testimony exclusively with a listener's reflectively accessible reasons is to mistake the factors that might ordinarily indicate justification with the nature of justification.

Lackey thus argues for reliability theories over their internalist counterparts on the basis of the NESTED SPEAKER example. It's important to note that, explicitly, the NESTED SPEAKER case doesn't provide a motivation for the production theory (PR) describes. The motivation for (PR) over, for example the comprehension theory given in (CR), comes from what Lackey concludes, which is that '[i]t is, therefore, not enough for testimonial justification or warrant that a hearer have even epistemically excellent positive reasons for accepting a speaker's testimony—the speaker must also do her part in the testimonial exchange by offering testimony that is reliable or otherwise truth-conducive' (Lackey, 2008, p. 154). This conclusion yields a reason for rejecting (CR).

The problem with identifying justification from testimony with a listener's positive reasons, according to Lackey, is that there are at least possible situations in which the reasons might not appropriately connect the listener to reliable testimony. Since this is the argument against thinking of (TI), parity of reasoning

also seems to yield a rejection of (CR), since even if a listener's comprehension processes were highly unconditionally reliable, it might still be possible that a listener's comprehension processes *might* put her in touch with testimony that wasn't reliably produced. Put another way, there is an equally coherent possibility of a listener with reliable comprehension processes believing testimony that is in fact false and unreliably formed. The result is an argument against the comprehension theory (CR) describes, which can be summarised as follows:

- (55) Justification from testimony cannot be a matter of factors that fail to guarantee the reliability of the speaker's testimony.
- (56) The reliability of the processes that (CR) refers to fail to guarantee the reliability of the speaker's testimony.

Therefore

- (57) Justification from testimony cannot be a matter of the factors that (CR) refers to.

I'll come back to this argument in 7.2.1. For now, it's important to get the arguments Lackey uses to motivate (PR) in view. Lackey motivates reliability theories over transmission theories using cases such as the CONSISTENT LIAR case and over internalist theories using the NESTED SPEAKER case. The case for the production theory (PR) gives over the comprehension theory in (CR) comes from the thought that a similar case to the NESTED SPEAKER case could be formulated featuring an appeal to a listener with an unconditionally reliable faculty for distinguishing between true and false statements.

6.5.2 Graham's Arguments

In addition to the cases given above by Lackey, Graham (2000b) seeks to motivate the production theory described in (PR) over competing theories. Graham makes three main arguments for (PR). Like Lackey's arguments, Graham uses intuitions about a variety of cases to intuitively motivate (PR).¹³⁹ Graham's first argument considers a situation similar to the one in 6.3, in which a listener happens to form her belief by believing the only reliable source in the local environment. The second features a modified version of a case originally given by Fred Dretske (1982) featuring a wine taster. The third involves considering the story of the boy who cried 'Wolf!' as a motivation for (PR).

¹³⁹Indeed, there are similarities between Graham's cases and some of Lackey's cases that were not my central focus in Chapter 3. I will highlight these where appropriate. Furthermore, as noted in 3.2, Graham also deploys a type of schoolteacher case against transmission theories.

Before getting into the details of Graham's discussion, it's important to introduce some background terminology. Like many theories, Graham's theory of knowledge takes it that knowledge is a matter of true belief supported by adequate grounds.¹⁴⁰ Unlike the majority of reliability theories, Graham gives an *infallibilist* account of justification, according to which an individual's grounds can support knowledge only if those grounds guarantee the truth of the belief in question.¹⁴¹ Graham expresses this in terms of *carrying information*.

Guaranteeing truth, for Graham, isn't a matter of excluding *all* other possibilities. Rather, it's a matter of excluding all other *relevant* possibilities. As Graham puts it:

The information-carrying requirement incorporates the popular "no relevant alternatives" requirement [...] Here the idea is that if I cannot perceptually distinguish P from $Q - P$ and Q are "perceptual equivalents" or tokens of the same type and the possibility that Q is not relevant, then the fact that I cannot distinguish between P and Q does not prevent me from perceptually knowing that P (Graham, 2000a, p 367).

The notion of carrying information is thus driven by considerations similar to those that motivate reliability theories. The reason that carrying information is important is that the individual's belief will be suitably likely to be true only if her grounds for that belief carry the relevant information.

Graham applies this notion to testimony by arguing that the listener's justification is a matter of her own internal cognitive state. Where the listener's cognitive state carries the information that p , Graham takes it that the listener's belief that p is justified (Graham, 2000a, p. 365). On the face of it, however, this would appear to be an endorsement of the comprehension theory in (CR) over the production theory in (PR). Graham's theory emerges as an endorsement of (PR) rather than (CR), however, by linking justification from testimony to the question of whether or not the speaker's testimony carries the relevant information. This in turn depends on the reliability of the processes involved in the production of the speaker's testimony.

Graham's first case involves someone who reads that p in a newspaper. The reporter wrote that p because he knew that p and wished to express that p , but all of the other newspapers are employed in a conspiracy theory to cover up the fact that p and thus report that $\neg p$. As a result, the listener comes to form a true belief by fortunately selecting the only reliably produced newspaper report in

¹⁴⁰Cf. Williamson (2000).

¹⁴¹This is endorsed by McDowell (1995) and Williamson (2000) for example.

an environment densely populated with misleading reports.¹⁴² This argument is primarily intended to undermine the claim that a listener believing that p based on testimony from someone with justification for p is sufficient for the listener's belief being supported by testimonial justification. But Graham argues that it also supports the claim that the listener's internal cognitive state carrying the information that p is a necessary condition on the listener's belief being justified.

It's easy enough to see how this undermines the idea that a speaker having justification for what she says is sufficient to justify the listener's belief. It's more complicated, however, to see how this case might motivate the claim that the listener's internal cognitive state, the character of which depends on facts to do with the speaker's testimony, carrying the information relevant to her belief is a necessary condition of the listener's belief being justified. Graham argues that, in this case, the listener's internal cognitive state doesn't carry the relevant information.

Graham's argument for this comes from the fact that there are other reports in the local environment that, had the listener believed any of these, would have produced a cognitively equivalent state that would have been misleading. They are, according to Graham, cognitively equivalent since they are states of the same type. The idea is that, since the listener can't distinguish between the true statement and the false statements, her internal cognitive state doesn't carry the information relevant information, even though the speaker's testimony does. The speaker's testimony carrying the information that p is thus necessary but not sufficient for the listener's internal cognitive state carrying the information that p . Thinking of justification in terms of the listener's internal cognitive state carrying certain information thus yields the correct account of this case.

The second case that Graham considers is similar to Dretske's wine drinker case. Dretske describes a wine expert, who can reliably tell whether a wine is a Medoc or a Chianti, but believes that a Chianti, like a Medoc, is a Bordeaux wine. One day, the drinker recognises a particular wine as a Medoc, but simply tells a listener that it is from Bordeaux (Dretske, 1982, p. 110). The important claims in Dretske's case are the following:

- (58) The speaker's belief that the wine is a Bordeaux is justified.
 (59) The listener's belief that the wine is a Bordeaux isn't justified.

It follows from this that:

- (60) A listener believing a speaker who has justification for what she says isn't sufficient for her belief being justified.

¹⁴²This case is from Harman (1973).

This indicates that justification is a matter of the reliability of the speaker's testimony, rather than transmission.¹⁴³

Graham develops this further by seeking to respond to an obvious rejoinder on behalf of transmission theories. A natural point for transmission theories to make in response is to deny (58). This would mean transmission theories (like reliability theories) return the intuitively correct verdict that the speaker's testimony doesn't make justification available to the listener. And there's a motivation for denying (58). The speaker's belief is unjustified for exactly the same reason that his testimony is unreliably produced; his false belief that a Chianti is also a type of Bordeaux.

In response, Graham argues that the question of whether or not the drinker's false belief about Chianti renders his belief about the Medoc unjustified depends on exactly how far beyond this his mistake extends. If this is his only mistake about wines, then Graham thinks the drinker's belief is justified, since we don't ordinarily want to say that a New Yorker believing that New Mexico is in Mexico, whilst still believing that Wisconsin is in the USA fails to know the latter proposition in virtue of believing the former (Graham, 2000b, p. 137).

The third argument Graham considers features the story of the boy who cried 'Wolf!' The traditional story involves a boy who regularly proclaims that there is a wolf in the vicinity simply because he enjoys inducing false beliefs in the locals. Obviously, in such situations, the boy's testimony isn't reliable. He regularly states falsehoods about there being a wolf. One day the boy proclaims that there's a wolf in the vicinity when this is in fact true. Graham considers two distinct versions of this story.

The first involves the boy declaring that there's a wolf because he has seen the wolf, realises the gravity of the situation and instantly repents his previous lies, deciding to stop deceiving the locals. In this situation Graham claims that '[h]e now says that there is a wolf because he sees one [...] now that he detects danger, his report of the threat to the village is a reliable one' meaning that his statement can be a source of knowledge (Graham, 2000b, p. 141). In such a situation, the boy is a reliable reporter. In Graham's words '[h]e now, or at least in these circumstances, says that P only if P. The boy was an unreliable reporter, but he no longer is. He is like a thermometer that once was broken but now is fixed' (Graham, 2000b, p. 142).¹⁴⁴

¹⁴³Cf. Lackey's (2008) ALMOST A LIAR case, in which a speaker tells a listener that p because she knows that p , though she might easily have lied and said that $\neg p$. While the drinker's testimony is a sincere mistake, rather than a lie, the cases are otherwise similar.

¹⁴⁴This is why Graham's theory isn't an individualist theory. Whilst Graham takes the reliability of the process of comprehension-with-filtering to be necessary for justified belief, the listener's belief is justified only if her internal cognitive state of taking the speaker to have said that p carries the information that p . And a listener's internal cognitive state of taking the speaker to have said that p

In the second situation, the boy sees that there is a wolf, but then flips a coin to decide whether or not to lie. In this situation, even if the coin falls such that he reports truthfully, Graham states that the speaker is ‘a reliable believer, but he is not a reliable reporter’ meaning that his statement doesn’t carry the relevant information (Graham, 2000b, p. 142). It’s crucial to Graham’s theory that justification is a matter of the reliability of the processes involved in the production of the speaker’s testimony, rather than transmission. Again, we have the following pattern of claims:

(61) The speaker’s belief that there is a wolf is justified.

(62) The listeners’ beliefs that there is a wolf aren’t justified.

And again, it follows from this that:

(63) A listener believing a speaker who has justification for what she says isn’t sufficient for her belief being justified.¹⁴⁵

We can thus spell out (TR) in terms of the production theory that (PR) gives, rather than the comprehension theory that is given by an endorsement of (CR). I’ll come back to the question of what motivation there is for preferring (PR) to (CR) in 7.2. The important point for now, is that one way of identifying the processes relevant to justification from testimony involves identifying those involved in the production of the speaker’s testimony.

6.6 Extendedness

Thus far, we’ve seen that there are multiple sets of processes involved in a testimonial exchange. There are those in the listener, which the comprehension theory that (CR) gives takes to determine justification from testimony and there are those in the speaker, which the production theory given by (PR) takes to determine justification from testimony. A third way of spelling out (TR) involves considering an *extended* process, which incorporates *both* the processes involved in the production of the speaker’s testimony *and* the listener’s comprehension processes. This yields the following account:

carries the information that *p* only if the speaker is a reliable reporter. The result is that the relevant facts are those concerning the production of the speaker’s testimony.

¹⁴⁵The way that I think transmission theories should deal with the case here is along the lines of the strategy in 3.8. The speaker doesn’t say that there’s a wolf *because* of his justification for thinking that there’s a wolf. See Turri (2011b). Transmission theories can thus claim that the speaker’s testimony doesn’t appropriately connect the listener to his justification for what he says. The same is true in the case of Dretske’s drinker.

- (ER) The process relevant to a listener's justification is an extended process incorporating both the processes identified in (PR) and the processes identified in (CR).

Goldberg (2010) articulates this type of approach in the following statement:

[I]nsofar as testimonial belief-formation is a quasi-belief-dependent process whose input concerns the testimonies of one's source, this belief-forming process should be seen as an intersubjective one. Such a process involves cognitive processing in the mind/brain of the consumer of testimony, but it also extends back to include cognitive processing in the producer of the testimony as well (Goldberg, 2010, p. 80).

Arguing for (ER), involves arguing that neither the reliability of the processes identified in the comprehension theory (CR) describes nor the reliability of the processes identified in the production theory (PR) describes is sufficient to justify a listener's belief.

The theory that claims that the final stage of a process by which a belief was formed being reliable is sufficient for the belief being justified, Goldberg calls Terminal Phase Reliabilism. Applied to testimony, Terminal Phase Reliabilism yields (CR), more specifically (CR**). Against this theory, Goldberg considers a case in which a speaker forms a perceptual belief that *p*, though her belief is formed just through a quick glance from a long distance in slightly dim light where the object in question was slightly obscured from her. Nonetheless, the speaker subsequently tells a listener that *p* and the listener believes that *p* after employing a reliable process similar to comprehension-with-filtering.

According to Goldberg, '[i]t should be patent that the hearer's testimonial belief fails to amount to knowledge' and this doesn't change even if we stipulate that the processes in the listener are reliable (Goldberg, 2010, pp. 98-99). The reason that the belief fails to amount to knowledge is, according to Goldberg because the process involved in the production of the speaker's belief isn't quite sufficient to render the belief justified. As a result, the listener's belief fails to amount to knowledge, even though the final stage of the process by which she formed her belief—the process the comprehension theory given by (CR**) identifies—is reliable.

That the listener lacks justification doesn't obviously follow from the fact that she lacks knowledge. One might contend that the belief fails to amount to knowledge because it's a Gettier case. If this type of case is a Gettier case, then the belief clearly is justified, the lack of knowledge notwithstanding.

Goldberg's argument against this begins with the following:

(64) The speaker's belief isn't a Gettier case.

This is because the speaker's belief isn't formed in a way that's reliable enough for it to count as justified at all. From (64), we get the following:

(65) If the listener's belief is a Gettier case, then this must be explained in terms of the testimonial process itself.

And Goldberg thinks there's nothing in the testimonial process that can do this. Furthermore, Goldberg claims that the belief's failure to amount to knowledge can be explained perfectly well without appeal to Gettier cases and as such '[t]he postulation of a Gettier condition is both unnecessary and without independent support' (Goldberg, 2010, p. 103). This gets us to (64).

This, for Goldberg, falsifies (CR) and (CR**). Nonetheless, Goldberg thinks that we shouldn't accept (PR) as an adequate account of (TR). The idea is that, where (CR) misses the relevance of the processes in (PR), (PR), in turn, misses the relevance of the processes in (CR). Establishing this requires establishing the following claim:

(66) The processes that (CR) refer to are relevant to the reliability of the processes involved in the formation of the listener's belief.

To establish (66), Goldberg considers two memory systems, M_1 , and M_2 . M_1 and M_2 serve to translate apparent memories into beliefs. Both processes are highly conditionally reliable in that, where the apparent memory is veridical, both processes produce a true belief. The difference between M_1 and M_2 , however, manifests itself when the inputs are false. Where M_1 invariably produces an output in such cases, M_2 does not. The reason for this is that M_2 has a filter attached to it that sometimes prevents the formation of false beliefs. As a result, given inputs that are true around 50% of the time, M_1 yields true beliefs around 50% of the time and M_2 yields true beliefs around 90.6% of the time (Goldberg, 2010, pp. 118-121).

Clearly, M_1 is a less reliable process than M_2 . But the important moral of this story is the following:

(67) M_1 's outputs are less reliable than M_2 's outputs *even in cases where both outputs are true*.

Goldberg argues for (67) by considering a third memory process, M_3 . M_3 is perfectly conditionally reliable, but it operates in an environment in which its inputs are false 99% of the time. As a result, its outputs are false 99% of the time. Goldberg observes that the fact that 99% of the outputs are false means that, in the

1% of cases in which its outputs are true, these can't be reliable, in any meaningful sense (Goldberg, 2010, pp. 122-123). This means that there has to be more to the reliability of the outputs than the quality of the inputs.

If we regard memory processes as sufficiently analogous to testimony processes, then this translates back to testimony. The idea is that a listener's comprehension processes are analogous to the memory processes M_1 , M_2 and M_3 . The observation that the reliability of M_1 , M_2 and M_3 is relevant to the reliability of the memory processes overall means that the reliability of the listener's comprehension processes is relevant to the reliability of the process by which a listener forms her belief. This establishes (66). Combining this with the observation that, no matter how reliable the comprehension processes, the process being reliable depends on the speaker's testimony being reliably produced as observed from considering the speaker who sees that p under sub-optimal visual conditions. Combining these observations yields (ER).

6.7 Summary

The basic idea behind reliability theories of justification from testimony is given in (TR). Spelling out (TR) involves giving an account of the nature of the process relevant to justification from testimony. I've identified three main ways of spelling out (TR). The first identifies the comprehension processes in the listener as relevant to justification from testimony. This was initially identified as (CR) and later developed into (CR**). The second identifies the processes involved in the production of the speaker's testimony as relevant to justification from testimony. This was identified as (PR) and motivated through various intuitive considerations that purported to show that intuitions about where a listener can form a justified belief follow cases in which the speaker's testimony is reliably produced. The final theory was (ER), which combined the processes identified by (CR) and the processes identified by (PR), to be analysed as one process. The case for (ER) came from the observation that the processes involved in (CR) seem to be relevant to assessments of the overall reliability of the testimonial exchange, but so too do the processes in (PR). In short, I've identified various ways in which reliability theories of justification from testimony might spell out the basic idea expressed in (TR). In the next chapter, I turn to evaluating the resulting theories.

Chapter 7

Against Reliability

7.1 Introduction

As observed, the basic idea behind reliability theories is that a listener's justification is a matter of the reliability of the testimonial process. This was expressed in (TR). And different reliability theories take a different process to be central to the testimonial process. In this way, they spell out what (TR) amounts to differently. The success or failure of a particular version of (TR) depends on two things. Firstly, it must be the case that it's intuitively adequate. Secondly, it must be the case that it's in line with the principles behind reliability theories. In this chapter, I argue that there are serious reasons for doubting whether any version of (TR) can give an account that meets both of these conditions.

The general strategy of this chapter is to argue for the following claim:

- (68) No reliability theory can give an adequate account of the process (TR) refers to.

I argue that reliability theories of testimony fail because they face one of two problems. The first problem concerns not respecting the principles behind reliability theories in general. This, I think is true of the theories given in (PR) and (ER). I argue that the theories given in (PR) and (ER) rest on an argument against the comprehension theory given in (CR**) that isn't in line with the general idea of thinking about justification in terms of reliability. Whilst it's correct to think that (CR**) is intuitively problematic, in the way that defenders of (PR) and (ER) do, if we think of justification in terms of reliable processes, we aren't in a position to exploit this intuition.

Any account of how to spell out (TR) needs to say why it, rather than some other version is correct. And the explanation of why it's correct needs to be some-

thing that isn't in conflict with the idea that justification is a matter of reliable processes. The most obvious argument against (CR**), however, is in conflict with the idea that justification is a matter of reliable processes. And this means that defending (PR) or (ER) on these grounds is unprincipled. In short, I argue that there's no principled way for reliability theorists to endorse the claim that the reliability of the processes that either (PR) or (ER) identify are sufficient for justification from testimony without also endorsing the claim that the reliability of the processes that (CR**) identifies is also sufficient for justification from testimony.

Having argued that the production theory given in (PR) and the extended theory given in (ER) respectively are problematic because they deny that the reliability of the processes that (CR**) identifies could yield justified belief and have no principled framework for doing this, I move to consider a theory that respects the thought that the reliability of the processes (CR**) identifies can be sufficient to yield justified belief. I consider a *disjunctive* theory, according to which a listener's belief can be justified in virtue of *either* the processes that (PR) identifies being reliable *or* the processes that (CR**) identifies being reliable. The disjunctive theory doesn't face the problem identified for (PR) and (ER).

It does, however, face a different problem. The disjunctive theory allows that the process relevant to a listener's justification might depend on how the listener responds to the speaker's testimony. But even though it allows this, it isn't able to give a full account of the epistemic consequences of the different ways in which a listener can respond to a speaker's testimony. The plausibility of the disjunctive theory depends on it allowing that a listener's attitudes can determine what justifies her belief. But once the disjunctive theory allows this, it also needs to make sense of a notion of taking a speaker's word for it and lacks the resources to do this. It lacks the resources to do this exactly because it denies the possibility of a listener's belief being justified by a speaker's justification for what she says.

7.2 The First Problem

The first part of arguing for (68) involves thinking back to the comprehension theory given in (CR**). According to this theory, the reliability of the process of comprehension-with-filtering determines the listener's justification for her belief in a speaker's testimony. The claim that (CR**) expresses is unpopular and there are good intuitive reasons for this. These are given by Lackey, Graham and Goldberg. It's highly intuitive that the speaker's epistemic competence can make a difference to the justification available to the listener. This intuition is at the heart of the DOCTOR and DOCTOR* cases that I used in 5.2 to argue against

internalist theories of justification from testimony. The trouble is that, like internalist theories, (CR**) gives an intuitively problematic account of DOCTOR and DOCTOR*. It gives an account that doesn't allow that the speaker's epistemic competence can determine the justification available to the listener. In the same way, it also gives an intuitively problematic account of Lackey's NESTED SPEAKER case, as described in 6.5.1. So it was on these grounds that Goldberg's discussion rejected the comprehension theory constituted by an endorsement of (CR**) in 6.6.

As a result, we can generally agree that (CR**) fails to give an adequate account of how to spell out the basic idea behind reliability theories of justification from testimony, given in (TR). If we want to reject (CR**) on intuitive grounds, then one adequacy condition on accounts of how to spell out the process identified by (TR) is intuitive adequacy. An account of how to spell out (TR) must make claims that are intuitively plausible. It must also make defensible epistemic claims, by giving plausible accounts of which beliefs are justified and which beliefs aren't. And (CR**) fails in this respect. But intuitive adequacy and defensible epistemic claims aren't the only adequacy conditions on an account of how to spell out (TR). A theory might be intuitively adequate but fail to be adequate on other grounds.

For a theory to give an adequate account of how to spell out (TR), it also needs to remain true to the basic principles behind reliability theories. Even if a theory is intuitively adequate and makes defensible epistemic claims, if it isn't true to the principles behind reliability theories in general, then it can't be a viable account of how to spell out (TR). Reliability theories are motivated by the thought that justification is a matter of truth-conduciveness. And this thought must be respected by any adequate account of how to spell out (TR). The reason that remaining true to the principles behind reliability theories in general is an adequacy condition on how to spell out (TR) is that (TR) is just an application of the basic idea behind reliability theories of justification in general to the domain of testimony. Failing to remain true to the central idea behind reliability theories thus cannot yield an adequate account of how to spell out (TR).

These are the conditions that Conee and Feldman (2004) present as adequacy conditions on a response to the *generality problem* for reliability theories. The problem that I'm presenting here is similar to the generality problem, but I don't think that it's the same. For present purposes, it's most important to appreciate that, whilst one way for a reliability to fail to adequately spell out (TR) is by failing to be intuitively adequate, as (CR**) does. I argue that (PR) and (ER) respectively fail to be adequate ways of spelling out (TR) because they aren't appropriately in line with the principles behind reliability theories of justification in general.

I'll begin by arguing that (PR) cannot be an adequate reliability theory of testimony, because it fails to respect the idea that justification is a matter of truth-conduciveness. With that in hand, I'll argue that the problem for defenders of (PR) also applies to defenders of (ER).

7.2.1 Lackey's Objection

Lackey objects to the comprehension theory given by an endorsement of (CR**) based on the NESTED SPEAKER example discussed in 6.5.1. The idea is that, whilst the listener forms her belief by using her various good reasons for thinking that the speaker's testimony is true, it's intuitive that her belief is unjustified because the speaker's testimony isn't reliably produced. Hence, Lackey concludes that internalism about testimony is implausible because the listener's good reasons don't guarantee the reliability of the processes that (PR) identifies.

As observed in 6.5.1, this objection extends to the idea that justification is a matter of the reliability of comprehension process, as (CR**) states, as well as internalist theories. This is Lackey's justification for rejecting (CR**). The idea is that, even if the processes (CR**) refers to were *infallible*, then this wouldn't justify the listener's belief in the speaker's testimony. If the processes identified by (CR**) were infallible, then this would only mean that the listener would believe the speaker if and only if the speaker's testimony was *true*. It wouldn't guarantee that the listener would believe the speaker's testimony if and only if the processes identified by (PR) are *reliable*.

Obviously, this argument against the comprehension theory encapsulated in (CR**) depends heavily (indeed entirely) on the intuition that the listener's belief in NESTED SPEAKER is unjustified. Assuming that this is intuitive, however, Lackey's endorsement of (PR) succeeds where (CR**) fails. It offers an intuitively plausible account of the nature of justification from testimony and it makes defensible claims about which beliefs are justified. I think, however, that there's reason to think that Lackey's endorsement of (PR) fails to meet the final adequacy condition. There is, I think, reason to think that Lackey's endorsement of (PR) is at odds with the general principle behind reliability theories.

The argument against Lackey's endorsement of (PR) over (CR**) goes as follows:

- (69) (CR**) and (PR) yield different accounts of which beliefs are justified.
- (70) The set of beliefs that (CR**) identifies as justified and the set of beliefs that (PR) identifies as justified are alike with respect to reliability.

Therefore

- (71) By the standards of reliability, there is no reason to endorse (PR) over (CR**).

Obviously this is a problem for Lackey's claim that (TR) should be spelled out in terms of (PR). The basic idea behind reliability theories of justification in general is that justification is a matter of being formed through reliable processes. The reason that this is aligned with justification is because, unusual circumstances aside, beliefs formed through reliable processes will be true more often than beliefs that aren't. The trouble is, however, that (PR) and (CR**) identify different sets of beliefs as justified and that the members of the set of beliefs that (CR**) identifies as justified is just as reliably produced as the members of the set that (PR) identifies. This means that the basic idea behind reliability theories offers us no reason for claiming that the beliefs formed through reliable processes, as identified by (PR) are the justified ones, rather than the beliefs formed through reliable processes, as identified by (CR**).

I don't think that (69) requires any kind of supporting argument. Defenders and critics of reliability theories alike should (and do) think that (69) is true. Rejecting the theory given in (CR**) and defending the production theory that (PR) describes instead requires that there be a difference between the accounts of which beliefs are justified. This means that the crux of this argument concerns the claim that the different sets of beliefs can be equally reliably produced, as (70) states, and whether or not any convincing motivation can be given for (70).

To bring out the point that a listener who forms beliefs through the processes involved in (CR**) being reliable can form beliefs that are as reliably produced as those formed by a listener who forms beliefs through the processes involved in (PR) being reliable, all that we need to allow is the possibility of a listener having a faculty for distinguishing between true and false testimony that is infallible. It doesn't need to be the case that any listener actually has such a faculty, but it needs to be the case that there's no logical contradiction in claiming that a listener has such a faculty.

Assuming that it's at least possible that a listener could have such a faculty, this means that beliefs formed through reliable processes as identified by (CR**) can be as reliably produced as beliefs formed through reliable processes as identified in (PR). In a case where an individual formed a belief through an infallible comprehension process, as identified by (CR**) wouldn't form a false belief in this way. This means that, even if the processes involved in the production of a speaker's testimony, as identified in (PR), could be infallible, beliefs formed through believing such a speaker wouldn't be any more reliably produced than beliefs formed through an infallible comprehension process.

The case for endorsing (PR) over (CR**) thus requires some explanation of why a comprehension process couldn't be as reliable as a production process. And there seems to be no reason to think that this is the case. Even if it's actually the case that production processes are more reliable than comprehension processes, endorsing the production theory described by (PR) over the comprehension theory described by (CR) needs some way of explaining why this isn't just mere contingent fact. It's hard to see where such an explanation might come from.

Once we observe this, we can see why the claim that the beliefs justified according to (CR**) are as reliably produced as those justified according to (PR), as (70) states. If a listener being capable of infallibly filtering true and false testimony is at least, possible, then the comprehension processes in (CR**) could render the process involved in the formation of the listener's belief completely reliable. However reliable the production processes that (PR) identifies are, they can't make a belief more reliably formed than this. And this means that, if we accept the basic idea behind reliability theories that justification is a matter of being formed through reliable processes, then there's no obvious reason for thinking that the production processes that (PR) identifies rather than the comprehension processes (CR**) identifies are the ones relevant to justification from testimony. There's no way to maintain that the reliability of the processes that (PR) can be sufficient to justify a listener's belief whilst simultaneously denying the claim that the comprehension processes that (CR**) identifies are also sufficient.

A natural objection to this line against Lackey's endorsement of (PR) is that the way that it sets up the terms of the dialectic is unfair. One might wonder exactly why a defender of (PR) over (CR**) must argue that there's a difference *in terms of reliability* between the beliefs that are justified according to (PR) and the beliefs that are justified by (CR**). I've suggested that the status of (PR) as a way of spelling out (TR) depends on it, but one might think that this isn't true. As stated, (PR) *does* think that justification is a matter of reliable processes and there *is* an intuition, which Lackey's discussion identifies and exploits, that it's the set of processes that (PR) identifies rather than the set that (TR) identifies that matter for justification from testimony.

The idea is that the claim that a defender of (PR) needs to find some difference in terms of reliability between the beliefs that are justified according to (PR) and the beliefs that are justified according to (CR**) is false. Rather, the idea is that the defender of (PR) needs to find some motivation for (PR) over (CR**) that doesn't involve moving away from the thought that justification is a matter of reliable processes. And since (PR) says that justification is a matter of a particular set of reliable processes, it doesn't do this. Hence, the defender of

(PR) can use the simple intuition that (PR) gives the correct account of certain cases that (CR**) doesn't to motivate (PR) over (CR**).

Essentially, the question is whether or not the defender of (PR) can use the intuition that Lackey identifies and exploits. The defender of (PR) suggests that she can, but I'm objecting that this is illegitimate. I don't think that the fact that (PR) takes it that justification is a matter of the reliability of a particular set of processes is enough to stay in line with the general principle behind reliability theories. Here's why.

If we think that justification is a matter of being formed through reliable processes, then it seems that we have good reason to reject the intuition that Lackey's endorsement of (PR) over (CR**) stands on. Even if we accept the *prima facie* appeal of the intuition, as I have proposed we should, if we also accept the basic principle behind reliability theories—that justification is a matter of being formed through reliable processes—then it seems that we should think that the intuition is misleading. The intuition seems to indicate that being formed through a reliable process isn't all there is to justification. And this is at odds with the basic idea behind reliability theories.

The result is that it's far from clear that a defender of (PR) over (CR**) can make use of the intuition that there are cases in which the processes that (CR**) identifies are reliable and yet the listener's belief is unjustified. If we subscribe to the basic idea behind reliability theories of justification in general, then we have an antecedent reason for thinking that the intuitions about these cases are somehow mistaken. And without these intuitions, it's not clear that there's any reason to think that (PR), rather than (CR**) is the correct account of (TR). There doesn't seem to be any good reason for thinking that the beliefs formed when the processes that (PR) identifies are *in principle* more reliably formed than the beliefs formed when the processes that (CR**) are reliable. Endorsing (PR) over (CR**) thus yields a theory that is intuitively adequate, but fails to be adequately connected to the principle behind reliability theories.

7.2.2 Graham's Objection

Graham's endorsement of (PR) is less dismissive than Lackey's of the reliability of the processes (CR**) identifies. Graham allows that listeners generally *do* possess a capacity for distinguishing between true and false statements and generally *do* make use of it in forming beliefs based on testimony. Furthermore, Graham argues that the reliability of this process *does* make a difference to the epistemic properties of the listener's belief. Unlike Lackey, Graham allows that the reliability of the processes (CR**) identifies does confer epistemic support on a listener's beliefs.

One might think that this brings Graham's endorsement of (PR) into line with the basic idea behind reliability theories. Where a listener believes a speaker's testimony and the processes (CR**) identifies are reliable, there's a difference in reliability between this case and a case in which other factors are the same but the processes in (CR**) aren't reliable. Graham's endorsement of (PR) does allow that this difference in reliability can make for a difference in epistemic properties, where Lackey's theory doesn't. One might think that this means that there's an explanation of why Graham's endorsement of (PR) is in line with the basic idea behind that reliability theories that isn't available with respect to Lackey's.

This point notwithstanding, Graham claims that the reliability of the processes that (CR**) identifies confers an epistemic support on beliefs that is both *prima facie* and *pro tanto*. The idea is that the reliability of the processes that (CR**) identifies confers some epistemic support on a listener's beliefs, but this support doesn't make the listener's belief *on balance* justified. Rather, it functions as an enabling condition. It serves to connect the listener's belief to what *does* justify it—the reliability of the processes described by (PR).

Graham's endorsement of (PR) over (CR**) thus rests on the following conjunction:

(72) The reliability of the processes (PR) identifies can justify a listener's belief.

And

(73) The reliability of the processes (CR**) identifies can only confer justification that is merely *prima facie* and *pro tanto*.

I think that there's good reason to wonder why the epistemic support that each set of processes confers should be understood in this way. For example, I think there's good reason to wonder why the conjunction of (72) and (73) is should be the correct version of (TR), rather than the following conjunction:

(74) The reliability of the processes (PR) identifies can only confer justification that is merely *prima facie* and *pro tanto*.

And

(75) The reliability of the processes (CR**) identifies can justify a listener's belief.

It's crucial to Graham's theory that (72) and (73) rather than (74) and (75) is the correct way of spelling out (TR). The result is that this claim needs motivation and the motivation for this claim needs to meet the adequacy conditions set out in 7.2. I'm not convinced that such an explanation can be given.

The first point to note is that it's hard to see how the basic idea behind reliability theories can offer a reason for endorsing (72) and (73) over (74) and (75). This is especially true given that Graham allows that the processes that (CR**) identifies can be unconditionally reliable. The basic idea behind reliability theories is that justification is a matter of reliable processes. And whilst (72) and (73) holds that reliability of the matter of one set of processes, (74) and (75) also endorses this. In the same way that I observed in 7.2.1 that the basic idea behind reliability theories offered no reason for thinking that the relevant processes are (PR) rather than (CR**), it similarly offers no reason for endorsing (72) and (73) over (74) and (75).

As a result, the considerations in favour of (72) and (73) over (74) and (75) are intuitive ones. But using intuitions here has to confront the same problem that was presented for Lackey's intuitive motivation for (PR) over (CR**). Whilst it might be true that there are *prima facie* intuitions that speak in favour of (72) and (73) over (74) and (75), one might think that an antecedent commitment to thinking of justification in terms of reliability provides a reason to think that this intuition is misleading. It's thus unclear that anyone defending a reliability theory of any type should be motivated by this kind of intuition.

So the argument against Graham's endorsement of (PR) can be summarised as follows:

- (76) Being *on balance* justified is just a matter of being the product of reliable processes.
- (77) The processes that (CR**) identifies are (at least sometimes) reliable.

Therefore

- (78) The beliefs formed through (CR**) are (at least sometimes) *on balance* justified.

This argument is incompatible with (73), which is what Graham claims. But I can't see how it is to be resisted. As observed in 6.5.2, Graham endorses (77). Denying (78) thus involves denying (76), which is just a statement of the basic idea behind reliability theories. This explains why I think that denying (78) (and endorsing (73)) isn't a strategy that reliability theories can take in endorsing (PR) over (CR**). Endorsing (PR) over (CR**) in this way abandons the central idea behind reliability theories.

7.3 Goldberg's Argument for (ER)

Unlike Lackey and Graham, Goldberg doesn't seek to establish (PR) over (CR**). Instead, Goldberg endorses (ER), according to which the process relevant to justification from testimony should be thought of as a process that includes both the processes that (PR) identifies and the processes that (CR**) identifies, evaluated as one process. Importantly, the process that (ER) identifies is reliable only if *both* the processes in (PR) and the processes in (CR**) are reliable.

I think that this theory faces the same problems that the defence of (PR) from Lackey in 6.5.1 and Graham 6.5.2 faced. The central idea is that the Goldberg's endorsement of (ER) undervalues the role that a listener's comprehension processes can play in terms of rendering the overall process reliable. The objection here comes in two parts. The first claims that Goldberg's theory is artificially committed to the idea that a listener's comprehension processes *couldn't* be unconditionally reliable. The second claims that, even if the listener's comprehension processes are merely conditionally reliable, we should still want to make sense of the idea that they can render a listener's belief reliably produced even if the processes involved in the production of the speaker's testimony aren't themselves reliable.

What is wanted, in arguing against Goldberg's theory is the possibility of a speaker producing statements that are true, for example, 45% of the time and the listener forming beliefs that are true, for example, 60% of the time. Whether the reliability of the comprehension processes is conditional or unconditional, a listener taking statements that are true 40% of the time and forming beliefs that are true 60% of the time is a genuine possibility.

This is most obvious in a case where the comprehension processes are unconditionally reliable. If the listener's comprehension processes are 60% reliable, then her beliefs are true 60% of the time *regardless of how reliable the testimony she receives is*. So if the listener received testimony that was true 45% of the time, but had a comprehension process that unconditionally yielded beliefs with 60% truth-frequency, then her beliefs would be produced with 60% reliability.

Of course, this approach to the listener's comprehension processes is entirely incompatible with Goldberg's claim that the reliability of the speaker's testimony matters. To say that the reliability of the listener's comprehension processes is unconditional is just to say that the reliability of the speaker's testimony *doesn't* matter. So it can't be the case that Goldberg's defence of (ER) claims that a listener's comprehension processes are unconditionally reliable.

This is a problem by itself, especially given Graham's endorsement of unconditionally reliable comprehension processes in 6.4. I think that there's also good intuitive sense to be made of someone with unconditionally reliable comprehen-

sion processes. Suppose that you have known me for years and are sensitive to various cues that I'm speaking falsely. It seems highly plausible that there's a fact about how reliably you can filter my testimony, regardless of how reliably the testimony has been produced. I think that it makes good sense to say that you might be able to tell with 75% accuracy when I'm speaking truly and when I'm not. And this means that the reliability of the production of my testimony is irrelevant.

What this shows is that, if the reliability of the comprehension processes involved in the listener is unconditional, then it's hard to see how the processes that (ER) identifies can coherently be thought of as a single process. Rather than thinking of (ER) as a single process, it's more natural to think that (ER) identifies the engagement of two distinct processes. In no sense does the reliability of the processes involved in the production of the speaker's testimony combine with the listener's comprehension processes. Rather, the listener's comprehension processes determine how reliably her belief is formed.

Goldberg's arguments in support of (ER), however, don't seem to feature unconditionally reliable comprehension processes. I don't think that this, by itself, is enough to avoid the above objection, because the mere possibility of unconditionally reliable comprehension processes are enough to falsify the claim that a listener's belief can't be reliably produced unless both the production processes and the comprehension processes are reliable. But I think that the same objection can be made even if the processes in question are only conditionally reliable.

The idea is that, the listener's comprehension processes work by taking inputs that are reliable to a certain degree and produce outputs that are more reliable. The reliability is conditional because the exact reliability of the outputs depends on the exact reliability of the inputs. So a reliable comprehension process might take inputs that are true 75% of the time and yield outputs that are true 80% of the time. Or it might take inputs that are true 60% of the time and yield outputs that are true 91% of the time.

If this is acknowledged, however, there seems to be no reason for thinking that a listener's comprehension processes couldn't take inputs that were true 40% of the time, for example, and yield outputs that were true 60% of the time. Obviously, a comprehension process that did this would filter out a lot of false beliefs. But there doesn't seem to be any reason why this should be impossible. This, however, is exactly the kind of case that falsifies Goldberg's claim that *both* the reliability of the processes involved in the production of the speaker's testimony *and* the reliability of the listener's comprehension processes are necessary for the listener's belief being reliably produced. Even if the reliability in question is only conditional reliability, in that the exact reliability of the outputs depends

on the exact reliability of the inputs, there's no reason for thinking that a reliable set of comprehension processes couldn't make it the case that, a listener couldn't reliably form true beliefs, even given unreliable inputs.¹⁴⁶

This means that, even if the reliability of the comprehension processes is conditional in this sense, it's still incorrect to think that the overall process being true depends on the speaker's testimony being reliable. Again, the listener's comprehension processes being highly reliable allows for the possibility of the listener's beliefs being reliably produced even when the inputs from the speaker's testimony are not reliably formed. Goldberg's defence of (ER) must allow that the comprehension processes *somehow* enhance the overall reliability. Otherwise, their reliability can't be necessary for the overall process being reliable. But if the comprehension processes do enhance the overall reliability, then there seems to be no reason why they couldn't enhance the overall reliability in such a way that they took unreliable inputs and yielded reliable outputs. This needn't involve turning false statements into true ones. It merely needs to involve filtering out false statements. And this is exactly what Goldberg thinks that a listener's comprehension processes can do.

Of course, Goldberg denies this on intuitive grounds. But, as was the case with the previous rejections of this claim, there are reasons for thinking that this is at odds with the basic idea behind reliability theories. The rejection of the idea that the comprehension processes in (CR**) could be sufficiently reliable to render the listener's belief reliable seems at odds with the basic idea behind reliability theories. Even if it is stipulated that the reliability in question is only conditional, sufficiently reliable comprehension processes could make it the case that a listener believed true statements 80% of the time. And reliability theorists should think that this makes for justified beliefs.

7.4 A Disjunctive Approach

I have been arguing that defences of both the production theory given in (PR) and the extended theory given in (ER) respectively fail because they fail to properly acknowledge the contribution to the reliability of the processes involved in the production of the listener's belief that the processes identified by the comprehension theory given in (CR**) can make. In the case of the extended theory, this involves a failure to acknowledge the fact that the comprehension processes can be reliable enough to render the reliability of the processes involved in the production of the speaker's testimony irrelevant. In the case of the production

¹⁴⁶One way to block this would be to suggest that the comprehension processes yield reliable outputs only when the inputs are reliable. But in such a case it would be hard to see how the reliability of the comprehension processes was supposed to be necessary for the reliability of the overall process.

theory, the failure is a failure to acknowledge that the significance of the reliability of the comprehension processes might extend beyond a merely *prima facie* and *pro tanto* justification. But for the reasons given in 7.2 concerning the intuitive inadequacy of a theory that doesn't allow that a speaker's epistemic competence can make a difference to the justification available to the listener, the comprehension theory encapsulated in (CR**) also fails to give an adequate account of how to spell out the basic idea behind thinking of justification from testimony in terms of reliable processes.

These considerations give rise to an alternative account of how to spell out the idea expressed in (TR) that justification from testimony is a matter of process reliability. The idea is that one might think that the reliability of the relevant process depends on *either* the comprehension processes that (CR**) identifies *or* the production processes that (PR) identifies being reliable. Now, the proposed theory *might* amount to an endorsement of the extended theory that (ER) describes in that it incorporates both the comprehension processes situated in the listener and the production processes situated in the speaker, but crucially, unlike Goldberg's account of (ER), it doesn't seek to evaluate these as one process and doesn't demand the reliability of both sets of processes. I therefore propose to treat the theory outlined here as an entirely different theory to the endorsement of (ER) given by Goldberg. Where Goldberg's theory holds that:

(ER*) The process in (ER) being reliable depends on *both* the processes in the listener being reliable *and* the processes in the speaker being reliable.

The proposed theory holds that:

(ER**) The process in (ER) being reliable depends on *either* the processes in the listener being reliable *or* the processes in the speaker being reliable.

Since the proposed theory requires that *either* set of processes be reliable, call this the *disjunctive theory*. The disjunctive theory is thus characterised by its endorsement of the following claim:

(DR) A listener's justification for her belief in a speaker's testimony that *p* is a matter of the reliability of *either* the processes involved in the production of the speaker's testimony *or* the comprehension processes situated within the listener.

As far as I am aware, nobody has sought to explicitly defend the disjunctive theory given in (DR). Nonetheless, I think that it's the theory that arises most naturally from applying the principles behind reliability theories of justification in general

to the epistemology of testimony. The disjunctive theory is thus worthy of some consideration. The discussion so far gives rise to an obvious objection to the disjunctive theory, but I don't think that this objection is successful.

In 7.2, I observed that any adequate account of how to spell out the basic idea that justification from testimony is a matter of process reliability, as stated in (TR), must make intuitively adequate claims. The failure to do this was what underpinned the rejection of the comprehension theory encapsulated in (CR**). There might be an initial case for thinking that the disjunctive theory also fails to do this. In 7.2.1, 7.2.2 and 7.3, I argued that various other theories succeed in making intuitively plausible claims, but they do so at the expense of being appropriately true to the principles behind reliability theories of justification. Since the disjunctive theory makes different claims to the theories that were discussed in 7.2.1, 7.2.2 and 7.3, one might think that there's an immediate problem with the disjunctive theory in that it fails to deliver intuitively adequate claims. Reliability theorists find it intuitive that neither of the processes are sufficient and since the disjunctive theory denies this, one might immediately think that the disjunctive theory is intuitively inadequate. Indeed, one might claim that even defenders of reliability theories should think that this is true, since it is defenders of reliability theories outlining the intuitively adequate claims about the comprehension processes, if reliable, being sufficient to justify the listener's belief.

On the face of it, one might think that making this objection involves the critic of reliability theories having things both ways. On the one hand, the critic wants to say that Goldberg's extended theory in (ER), according to which a listener's belief being justified requires both the reliability of the production processes and the reliability of the comprehension processes is incorrect because it ignores an intuition that it ought to take seriously. On the other hand, however, the critic also wants to say that the disjunctive theory in (DR) is problematic exactly because it *does* take this intuition seriously, where (ER) doesn't.¹⁴⁷ This seems to amount to the critic of reliability theories wanting to have things both ways. It's surely either the case that a reliability theory should treat this intuition seriously, in which case the objection to (DR) doesn't go through, or it's the case that a reliability theory shouldn't treat this intuition seriously, in which case the objection to (ER) doesn't go through. So, one might think, there's reason to be suspicious of objections to (DR) based on the claim that (DR) delivers intuitively inadequate results.

The story isn't quite this straightforward, since the objection against Goldberg's extended theory, stated in (ER), was grounded in the claim that it isn't a principled application of the basic idea behind justification from testimony as a

¹⁴⁷The same goes for the endorsements of the production theory (PR) in 7.2.1 and 7.2.2.

matter of process reliability and the objection against the disjunctive theory was made on intuitive grounds. A critic of reliability theories thus *could* make both objections without contradiction. The argument would go something like the following:

- (79) Any adequate application of (TR) must respect the thought that the processes in (CR**) being reliable can justify a listener's belief because of reliability principles.
- (80) Any adequate application of (TR) must respect the thought that the processes in (CR**) being reliable cannot justify a listener's belief because of intuitive grounds.

It therefore follows that:

- (81) There is no adequate application of (TR).

This argument provides a way of objecting to the extended theory given in (ER) and a way of objecting to the disjunctive theory given in (DR) without contradiction. It is, however, a weak objection. The weakness in the objection comes with the way in which it appeals to intuitions to reject (DR). For a reliability theorist who endorses (79) might well claim that the endorsement of (79), which is grounded in a principled application of the thought that justification is a matter of reliability, provides a reason to reject the intuitions that motivate the thought in (80). Insofar as there are intuitive grounds for thinking that justification generally is a matter of reliability, there are grounds that can be used to combat the intuition in (80). It's thus open to defenders of reliability theories to deny the thought in (80) in the way that I've been suggesting that defenders of the production theory given in (PR) and the extended theory given in (ER) respectively should. This means that the disjunctive theory given in (DR) can successfully respond to the first problem of respecting intuitions about reliability being sufficient for justified belief. I think, however, there's a stronger objection available, in the form of the second problem for reliability theories.

7.5 The Second Problem

The disjunctive theory given in (DR) allows that either the comprehension processes identified in (CR**) or the production processes identified in (PR) can determine the listener's justification for her belief in the speaker's testimony. A defender of the disjunctive theory owes us an account of when the relevant processes are the comprehension processes that (CR**) refers to and when they are the production processes that (PR) refers to. The claim that, in any case of

testimony, either the processes that (CR**) refers to or the processes that (PR) refers to being reliable is sufficient to meet the reliability required for justification is *not* an acceptable claim. It's unacceptable either by intuitive standards, or by the standards of reliability theories.

Recall the observation from 6.4 that, where someone infers something, defenders of reliability theories think that the relevant process is a belief-dependent inferential process. Translating this to testimony, however, means that where a listener uses a speaker's testimony to infer the truth of what she says, the relevant processes would seem to be the ones internal to the listener. This yields the following claim:

- (82) If the listener treats the speaker's testimony as evidence, then the processes relevant to a listener's justification are the comprehension processes that (CR**) identifies.

A defender of the disjunctive theory given in (DR) making this claim is both principled and intuitively adequate. It's principled because it comes from a more general account of inferential justification that reliability theories already have available. And it's intuitively adequate because, it's intuitive that, where a listener uses a speaker's testimony to infer the truth of what she says, the listener's justification just comes from the beliefs she uses to support her inference. So I think that (82) is the correct claim for a defender of (DR) to make.

Furthermore, defenders of (DR) can make sense of the idea that, sometimes, the relevant processes will be the ones that (PR) identifies. To see this, consider again the case from 2.2.3 in which a husband finds various bits of good evidence that his wife is having an affair, but ignores them and then forms the belief that his wife is having an affair purely on the basis of a fortune-teller's testimony. As I observed, it's intuitive that, given that the husband forms his belief *exclusively* on the basis of the fortune-teller's testimony, rather than the fortune-teller's testimony combined with the other evidence, the justification of his belief is exclusively a matter of justification from the fortune-teller's testimony.

Defenders of (DR) can return this verdict as well, by endorsing the following claim:

- (83) If a listener merely relies on a speaker, then the processes relevant to a listener's justification are the comprehension processes that (PR) identifies.

Again, I think that all of the moves required to set up this claim are moves that a defender of (DR) can legitimately make. The observation that the husband's good evidence is irrelevant if he doesn't base his belief on it is captured by the thought that the relevant processes are the ones involved in the production of

the speaker's testimony. This is both intuitively adequate and in line with the general thinking behind reliability theories.

I think that it's therefore fairly clear that the disjunctive theory given in (DR) can give an account of when the relevant processes are the production processes that (PR) identifies and when they are the comprehension processes that (CR**) identifies. By appealing to the distinction from 2.3.2 between treating a speaker's testimony as evidence and relying on a speaker, they can claim that there are occasions when the relevant processes are the processes in (CR**) and other occasions when the relevant processes are those in (PR). This account is both intuitively plausible and available to theories that take justification from testimony to be a matter of reliability.

One thing that it's important to notice, however, is that the disjunctive theory in (DR) can return this verdict only if it accepts that a listener's attitude towards a speaker's testimony can determine what justifies her belief. (82) and (83) offer a principled and adequate account of when the relevant processes are those that (PR) identifies and when they are the ones that (TR) identifies only if the defender of the disjunctive theory in (DR) allows that a listener's attitude towards a speaker's testimony can determine which process is relevant. Accepting that this is the case is necessary for the defender of (DR) to give the account in (82) and (83), but it also creates a serious problem for them.

If a defender of (DR) allows that the nature of the listener's justification depends on how she responds to the speaker's testimony, then it also needs to accommodate the thought that relying on a speaker and treating a speaker's testimony as evidence aren't the only two ways in which someone might respond to a speaker's testimony. As observed in 2.2, a listener might take a speaker's word for it, in a way that doesn't reduce to either relying on a speaker or treating a speaker's testimony as evidence.

The easiest way of presenting this in terms that are friendly to reliability theories is again to use the framework outlined by Sosa. One might rely on a speaker by presuming that the speaker's testimony is reliably produced. In such a case, a listener's presumption connects her belief to the production processes that (PR) identifies. Alternatively, a listener might treat a speaker's testimony as evidence. In such a case, a listener's attitudes connect her belief to the processes that (CR**) identifies. But a listener might also take a speaker's word for it, by presuming that the speaker has justification for what she says.

We treat people in ways that we don't treat mere machines. This is borne out by the more general literature on trusting.¹⁴⁸ Whatever we think trust is, we want to make sense of the idea that we can coherently treat people in ways that

¹⁴⁸See Baier (1986), Faulkner (2011), Holton (1994), Jones (1996), Pettit (1995) and Wright (2010).

we can't coherently treat mere machines. And it's this thought that underpins the idea that taking a speaker's word for it is distinct from merely relying on the speaker.

Taking a speaker's word for it doesn't reduce to a presumption about any kind of reliability. As such, it doesn't connect the listener's belief to any particular set of processes. But this means that, if it's possible to form a justified belief by taking a speaker's word for it, then there's a way of forming a justified belief on the basis of a speaker's testimony that the disjunctive theory given by (DR) can't make sense of. And this presents a problem for defenders of disjunctive theories.¹⁴⁹

In explaining why the production processes identified in (PR) are sometimes the relevant ones but the comprehension processes identified in (CR**) are sometimes the relevant ones, the best thing for a defender of the disjunctive theory given in (DR) to do is to claim that the relevant set of processes depends on how the listener responds to the speaker's testimony. Unfortunately, however, if a defender of the disjunctive theory does this, then she also needs to make sense of the idea that there's a third attitude that can determine a listener's justification. Taking a speaker's word for it is distinct from relying on a speaker and distinct from treating a speaker's testimony as evidence.

This means that the disjunctive theory doesn't give a complete account of the nature of justification from testimony. It tells us that a listener's belief can either be connected to the production processes in (PR) or it can be connected to the comprehension processes in (CR**). And it gives us a highly plausible account of when the listener's belief connects to each of these processes. Of course, if reliability theories had some alternative way of explaining why taking a speaker's word for it doesn't yield justified belief, then this would sort out the problem. But I can't see where such an account is going to come from.

Most obviously, one might reject the idea that taking a speaker's word for it yields justified belief by rejecting the externalist commitment that's needed to allow such a claim. If one commits to an internalist theory, then one can explain why taking a speaker's word for it doesn't yield justified belief. It doesn't do this because a listener's belief isn't based on her reflectively accessible reasons. But this obviously isn't open to a defender of a reliability theory. Defenders of reliability theories are already committed to thinking that it's possible for a listener's belief to be justified even though it isn't based on her reflectively accessible reasons, because a belief being justified through relying on a speaker, as it's described here, requires such a possibility. So the most obvious framework for thinking that taking a speaker's word for it doesn't yield justified beliefs isn't

¹⁴⁹I present an objection similar to this one against Sosa's theory in Wright (2014).

open to defenders of reliability theories.

In summary, the disjunctive theory given in (DR), according to which the listener's justification is determined either by the reliability of the processes involved in the production of the speaker's testimony or by the reliability of the comprehension processes situated in the listener, avoids the first problem for reliability theories. Unlike the production theory given in (PR) and the extended theory given in (ER), it respects the thought that the comprehension processes that (CR**) identifies could, if they were sufficiently reliable, be sufficient to render the listener's belief reliably formed by themselves. The trouble, however, is that endorsing (DR) requires an account of when the processes involved in the production of the testimony are the relevant ones and when the processes involved in the comprehension of the testimony are the relevant ones. The most plausible account of this is grounded in the idea that the listener's response to the speaker's testimony determines what justifies her belief. And this is open to defenders of (DR). Unfortunately, however, there's a problem if defenders of (DR) actually take this approach. Taking this approach then opens a question of how to understand taking a speaker's word for it. Taking a speaker's word for it doesn't reduce to a presumption about reliability and as such doesn't fit into the framework that (DR) provides. So whilst (DR) avoids the problems raised for theories that sought to defend the production theory given in (PR) and the extended theory given in (ER), it faces a different problem.¹⁵⁰

7.6 Summary: Against Reliability Theories

The problem with reliability theories, I think, is that they are importantly incomplete. Whichever version of reliability theory one takes to be the correct interpretation of the basic idea behind justification from testimony as a matter of reliability, as set out in (TR), we do not get a complete adequate account of justification from testimony. Exactly how the theory is incomplete depends on which application of (TR) we are looking at.

Considering the endorsements of the claim that the relevant processes are those involved in the production of the speaker's testimony, as stated in (PR) and defended by Lackey and Graham, these accounts don't provide a complete picture of justification from testimony because they don't allow for the possibility of a belief being justified in virtue of the reliability of the processes that (CR**) identifies. It might be intuitive that, if the processes identified by (PR) aren't reliable, then the listener's belief in the speaker's testimony isn't justified. But this is an intuition that defenders of any kind of reliability theory should view

¹⁵⁰I think that this is also problematic for competing reliability theories.

with suspicion, because if it's intuitive that the reliability of the comprehension processes doesn't yield justified belief, then it's also intuitive that justified belief is not a matter of reliable processes. This means that denying that the reliability of the comprehension processes can yield justified belief in a speaker's testimony is at odds with the basic idea behind reliability theories.

Something similar applies to Goldberg's endorsement of the extended theory given in (ER). Like Lackey and Graham, Goldberg rejects the comprehension theory on the grounds that it's intuitive that the comprehension processes in (CR**) don't yield justified belief even if they are reliable. But Goldberg also rejects the production theory on the grounds that the reliability of the processes that (CR**) identifies are clearly relevant (from the perspective of a reliability theory) to the listener's overall justification. Again, whilst this is intuitive, there are reasons to worry about whether it's in line with the principles behind reliability theories to deny that the processes that the production theory described in (PR) identifies can be sufficient for a listener's belief being justified.

The disjunctive theory given by (DR) doesn't deny the sufficiency of either the reliability of the processes that (CR**) identifies or the reliability of the processes that (PR) identifies. In this respect, it seems to fare altogether better than competing reliability theories in that it remains true to the motivating principles behind reliability theories. Nonetheless, the disjunctive theory also fails to give a complete account of justification from testimony because it fails to explain how taking a speaker's word for it can result in a listener's belief being justified. The reason for this is that the presumption involved in taking a speaker's word for it doesn't amount to a presumption of reliability and thus doesn't connect the listener's belief to any reliable process.

I've been arguing that we shouldn't think of justification from testimony in terms of reliability. One worry about this might be that there's a risk of the argument here sawing through the branch that the rest of the theory is sitting on. In 3.6 I argued that transmission theories should allow that a listener's belief can be justified in virtue of being the product of a reliable process. If the above discussion establishes that there's a problem with thinking of justification from testimony in terms of reliability, then one might think that this means that there's a problem for the characterisation of Lackey's counterexamples that I gave in 3.6.

The discussion here doesn't create a problem for the transmission theory I've been describing for two reasons. The first is that, in objecting to understanding justification from testimony in terms of reliability here, I've been arguing that reliability can't provide a *complete* account of justification from testimony. I've been arguing that a viable theory of testimony needs a notion of justification transmission that isn't reducible to reliability. This is compatible with the idea

that *sometimes*, justification from testimony can be a matter of reliability. And the theory described in 3.6 only requires this latter claim. So the claim that there's a problem with thinking of justification from testimony in terms of reliability needn't create a problem for the appeal to reliability on behalf of transmission theories in 3.6.

It's also worth noting that the counterexamples described in 3.5 that motivated the idea that justification from testimony can be a matter of reliability also fail to be counterexamples if one rejects the idea that justification from testimony can be a matter of reliability. The counterexamples proceed from an implicit (though purportedly intuitive) assumption that justification from testimony can be a matter of reliability. The claim that the listener's belief in the speaker's testimony can be justified in each case depends on this assumption. So if it's not the case that the justification that testimony provides can be a matter of reliability, then the cases from 3.5 just don't provide any kind of counterexample to transmission theories.

This means that objecting to reliability theories of justification from testimony doesn't similarly make trouble for transmission theories. Transmission theories can allow that justification from testimony can be a matter of reliability whilst maintaining that reliability cannot offer a complete account of the nature of justification from testimony by claiming that justification in the form of reliability .

Chapter 8

Conclusion: Theories of Testimony

8.1 Justification from Testimony

This thesis has sought to give an account of the way that beliefs based on testimony can be justified. I have been defending a transmission theory of testimonial justification. The central idea behind transmission theories is that, if we want to give a complete account of how beliefs based on testimony can be justified, we need to endorse the claim that testimony can transmit justification from speaker to listener. That is to say, a listener's belief can be justified in virtue of being supported by the speaker's justification for what she says.

An initial argument for this comes from the idea that, as listeners, we can believe what speakers say in various different ways. If we have the right kind of reasons available to us, we can infer the truth of what they say from the fact that they said it, in the way that we might infer the age of a tree by counting the number of rings inside it. Alternatively, we can rely on them in the way that we rely on instruments to reliably yield true outputs. Exactly how we respond to a speaker's testimony determines what justifies our beliefs. If we use our background reasons, then these reasons justify our beliefs. If we rely on the speaker, then the reliability of the speaker's testimony justifies our beliefs.

But there's an attitude that we can take towards other people that we can't coherently take towards natural signs or instruments that we can take towards speakers. We can take a speaker's word for it. Since speakers can be presumed to know things in a way that natural signs and instruments can't, there's a way of responding to a speaker's testimony that isn't available when we're responding

to natural signs or instruments. And as with the previous ways of responding, taking a speaker's word for it has implications for what justifies the listener's belief. Where a listener takes a speaker's word for it and thereby forms a justified belief, the listener's belief is justified by the speaker's justification for what she says.

To say that a listener's belief is supported by a speaker's justification is to say that justification is transmitted from speaker to listener. I gave a more precise outline of what this amounts to by invoking the vocabulary of truthmakers. Justification transmission, I suggested, should be thought of in terms of the truthmakers for the proposition *the speaker has justification for what she says* becoming truthmakers for the proposition *the listener has justification for what the speaker says*. Transmission theories of testimonial justification, which allow that a listener's belief can be justified in this way, give a distinctive theory of justification from testimony.

If we allow that testimony can be distinctive in this way, by transmitting justification from speaker to listener, we aren't thereby committed to thinking that this is the only way that testimony can yield justified beliefs. Existing objections to transmission theories are often based on the assumption that transmission theories are committed to the idea that a listener acquiring a speaker's justification for what she says is the only way that beliefs based on testimony can be justified. But this needn't be the case. If transmission theories are motivated by the thought that there's a way of responding to speakers that isn't available when responding to instruments or natural signs, one needn't think that this is the only way of responding to speakers. And since how the listener responds determines what justifies her belief, the fact that a listener can respond in ways other than the one that's distinctive to testimony means that there can be justification available to her other than the justification that's distinctively testimonial.

Competing theories of justification explain justification from testimony differently. According to one type of explanation, beliefs based on testimony are justified in the way that beliefs based on natural signs are justified and only in this way. This was the internalist account of justification from testimony. According to a second type of explanation, beliefs based on testimony are justified in virtue of being formed through a reliable process, like beliefs based on the deliverances on instruments. One thing that's crucial to transmission theories is that the notion of transmission doesn't reduce to either of these types of justification. This is what makes transmission theories distinctive.

Endorsing a transmission theory thus involves explaining why neither the internalist account nor the reliability account can suffice to give a complete account of justification from testimony without recourse to transmission. I argued against the completeness of internalist theories in Chapter 5. The idea is that, if

an internalist theory can give a complete account of the way beliefs based on testimony can be justified, then it can't be the case that, other things being equal, it's better for a listener to be told something by a more competent speaker. But ordinarily, we *do* think that it's better for a listener to be told something by a more competent speaker. And this is something that can't be accommodated. So internalist theories, I conclude, don't offer a complete account of justification from testimony. This isn't to say that a complete account of justification from testimony won't feature the kind of justification that internalist theories think that testimony provides as a part of it. But it is to say that the internalist account won't provide a complete account of justification from testimony.

Theories that explain justification from testimony in terms of reliability face a similar problem. Reliability theories are unable to give a complete account of the justification that supports beliefs based on testimony. Exactly why this depends on the exact reliability theory. Theories that seek to identify a particular process as the one relevant to justification from testimony fail because they are insensitive to the thought that other processes, specifically those involved in the listener's comprehension of the speaker's testimony might be reliable and thereby yield justified beliefs. So an adequate reliability theory needs to allow that the process relevant to a listener's justification can vary depending on how the listener responds to the speaker's testimony. But if this is to be allowed, then reliability theories need to account for the idea that a listener can take a speaker's word for it and, in doing so, believe the speaker's testimony in a way that doesn't reduce to a presumption about the reliability of a particular process. And reliability theories have no way of explaining this.

Exactly why reliability theories don't provide a full account of justification from testimony thus depends on the type of reliability theory. If it's a theory that seeks to identify a single process relevant to the listener's justification, then the theory needs an adequate account of why competing processes being reliable shouldn't be sufficient for the listener's belief being justified. And it's hard to see how such an explanation will go. If it's a theory that allows that the relevant process may differ in different situations, depending on how the listener responds, then the theory needs to accommodate the idea that a listener can take a speaker's word for it in a way that's distinctive to testimony.

As with the internalist explanation, denying the completeness of an explanation of justification from testimony in terms of reliability doesn't involve claiming that the explanations that reliability theories give doesn't feature at all in a complete account of justification from testimony. But it is to say that reliability by itself doesn't give an adequate account of all justification from testimony.

Ultimately, there's a sense in which there's truth in each of the three explanations. According to the theory that I've been developing here, testimony can

yield justified belief in the way that internalist theories describe. But it can also yield justified belief in the way that reliability theories describe. And it can also yield justified belief in the way central to transmission theories. Claiming this, however, isn't arguing for a hybrid theory of justification from testimony. Rather, the result is a transmission theory. This is because, unlike competing theories, transmission theories don't claim that there's a single model for all justification from testimony. The result is that, where internalist theories and reliability theories fail because they can't give a complete account of justification from testimony, transmission theories succeed since a notion of transmission can't be eliminated from a complete account of how testimony yields justified belief.

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