

Testimonial Justification: Reductionism, Anti-Reductionism and Dualism

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1 Testimonial Justification

- Theories consist in two claims: one about the *nature* of testimonial justification and one about the *scope* of testimonial justification.
- Traditional reductionist theories take it that testimonial justification consists in a listener's reasons and thus that the listener's belief cannot be supported by testimonial justification without such reasons.
- Traditional anti-reductionist theories deny both of these claims.
- Dualist theories seek to get in the middle of these theories, by holding that a listener *does* need reasons for thinking a speaker's testimony true, but that testimonial justification doesn't consist in these reasons.

2 The Big Question

- How do the listener's reasons relate to her belief?
- Dualists either need to say that the listener's belief must be *based on* her reasons, or that it doesn't have to be.
- I suggest that either way there's a problem for dualist theories.

3 A Negative Answer

- Suppose the belief does not have to be based on the reasons in question.
- The motivation for holding such reasons necessary is that believing a speaker's testimony without any reasons is irrational.
- But if the belief is not based on these reasons, then it doesn't seem that they do any work in making the listener's belief more rational.
- This means that the dualist claim that the testimonial justification depends on such reasons is unmotivated.

4 A Positive Answer

- If the belief does have to be based on the listener's reasons, then it seems like they should (at least sometimes) be part of her testimonial justification.
- The listener's belief resembles a paradigmatic inferential belief that is supported by the reasons involved, in some sense.
- Dualist theories thus require an account of why the listener's reasons are not part of her justification, but they are when the input is from (say) an instrument.
- It's hard to see what dualists are supposed to say here, since the point of the basing relation is that it connects beliefs to justifying reasons.

5 Summary

- Giving a theory of testimonial justification is hard work, since dualists have motivations for both of their claims, but each seems to imply the falsity of the other.
- The result is that we get a paradox about testimonial justification, but at least this paradox gives us something new to take a look at in the epistemology of testimony.