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THE DIVISION OF EPISTEMIC LABOR

ABSTRACT

In this paper I formulate the thesis of the Division of Epistemic Labor as a thesis of epistemic dependence, illustrate several ways in which individual subjects are epistemically dependent on one or more of the members of their community in the process of knowledge acquisition, and draw conclusions about the cognitively distributed nature of some knowledge acquisition.

1. THE DIVISION OF EPISTEMIC LABOR: THE BASIC IDEA

The idea that there is a division of epistemic labor can seem perfectly obvious – as obvious as is the claim that we rely on others for a good deal of what we know. In this paper I will be defending a specific formulation of this idea that locates the source of the division of epistemic labor in our *epistemic dependence* on others; and I will be arguing that this dependence should be understood in terms of the cognitively distributed nature of the work that underwrites the acquisition of certain kinds of knowledge. This phenomenon, I will be arguing, goes far beyond the sorts of case that are typically acknowledged under the label of “the division of epistemic labor.”

I begin with my formulation of thesis asserting the Division of Epistemic Labor:

DEL For all epistemic subjects S and some of S’s doxastic attitudes D, the epistemic properties of D depend in part on facts about members of S’s community, and in particular on facts regarding the epistemic perspective(s) and/or epistemically-relevant disposition(s) of one or more of these members.

By ‘epistemic perspective,’ I mean to encompass all of the facts that go into determining the epistemic character of a subject’s total doxastic state at a given time. And by ‘epistemically-relevant dispositions,’ I mean those dispositions

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relevant to inquiry, as well as those dispositions regarding the communication of information. With this as background, my claims are two. First, insofar as DEL captures the division of epistemic labor, this phenomenon is more pervasive than many have supposed. Second, we should distinguish between at least two different ways in which epistemic labor can be ‘divided,’ corresponding to two different ways in which one subject can epistemically depend on others. Although I will not be arguing for this, I believe that these two claims are connected: the phenomenon of the division of linguistic labor is more pervasive than is commonly supposed because most people only recognize one of the forms of epistemic dependence.

I regard the hypothesis asserting two distinct forms of epistemic dependence to capture an important fact about the division of epistemic labor. To a first approximation the distinction between these forms of epistemic dependence can be understood as follows:

- DIR A subject S_1 **directly (epistemically) depends** on another subject S_2 with respect to S_1 's doxastic attitude D when the following condition holds: there are variations in S_2 's epistemic perspective that would make for variations in the epistemic properties of D .
- DIF A subject S_1 **diffusely (epistemically) depends** on her community C with respect to her doxastic attitude D when the following condition holds: there are variations in the practices of the members of C , and variations in the states and dispositions of those members, that would make for variations in the epistemic properties of D ; and this effect remains even after we subtract the effects of any direct epistemic dependence S_1 exhibits with respect to D .¹

Of the two, what I am calling direct epistemic dependence is the familiar face of the division of epistemic labor. Nonetheless, I will be anxious to show that this is not the only face of that phenomenon.

DIR and DIF suggest thought experiments that might be used to determine which (if either) sort of epistemic dependence is in play in a given case. Take a case in which we want to determine whether a given subject S epistemically depends (with respect to her doxastic attitude D) on another subject, or on her community. The test involves varying the relevant features of the relied-upon subject, or of the community, leaving everything else fixed,² and then seeing whether this variation makes for a variation in any of the epistemic statuses attaching to D . A positive answer to this question would tell us that we have a case exhibiting the Division of Epistemic Labor, help us both to determine which sort of dependence is at issue and to identify the relevant epistemic status, and enable us to discern the sort of epistemic “work” that is being done to sustain that status by the relied-upon subject(s) or the community at large. In what follows I will be pursuing this line of reasoning, focusing on some familiar types of case in which belief-formation involves a social dimension.

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2. DIRECT EPISTEMIC DEPENDENCE: TESTIMONY CASES

The least controversial case of epistemic dependence on others is seen in testimony cases. There, a hearer H acquires the belief that p through accepting a speaker S's say-so to that effect. How does this manifest epistemic dependence?

One point should be uncontroversial: H depends on the epistemic goodness of S's testimony in the sense that H's testimonial belief cannot amount to testimonial *knowledge* unless S's assertion itself was sufficiently reliable.³ Suppose that S's testimony was not reliable. In that case there will be a sizable number of nearby possible worlds in which the testimony she gives is false. Insofar as S's testimony in those worlds strikes H as it struck H in the actual world, H accepts S's testimony in those worlds, and so (assuming that the process is content-preserving) acquires a false belief. Depending on the prevalence and proximity of such worlds, this would suffice to show that H's actual testimonial belief fails to be sensitive, safe, and/or reliable. Assuming knowledge requires one or more of these modal properties, H would then fail to know through accepting S's testimony (even if that testimony, and so H's belief based on it, are true).

We have just seen that variations in the reliability of S's testimony can make for variations in the epistemic status of H's testimony-based belief. From here it is a short distance to DIR, which (applied to the present case) would claim that there are variations in S's "epistemic perspective" that would make for variations in the epistemic properties of H's testimonial belief. To establish this it suffices to show that the reliability with which S testified is something that reflects S's epistemic perspective. Although there may be cases in which the reliability of a piece of testimony does not reflect the epistemic perspective of the speaker—consider the various cases that have been used in the literature to distinguish the reliability of testimony from the reliability of the speaker's corresponding belief (Lackey 1999, 2008; Graham 2000)—even so, in ordinary cases, the reliability with which S testified reflects the reliability of S's corresponding belief. In cases of this sort, changes in the reliability of the belief S expressed in her testimony make for changes in the reliability of S's testimony itself, which in turn can make for changes in whether H's belief based on that testimony amounts to knowledge. When this is so, we have an instantiation of DIR.

Though uncontroversial, the claim that testimonial knowledge instantiates DIR puts pressure on views that regard testimony as a kind of evidence (and testimonial belief as based on that evidence).⁴ Simply put, evidence-based belief does not manifest any epistemic dependence on others. Suppose that my belief that p is formed on the basis of my evidence E. Then the epistemic goodness of my belief that p would appear to be exhaustively determined by the epistemic goodness of E, together with the goodness of any "connecting generalization(s)" I use to bring E to bear on p.⁵ But it would seem that the epistemic goodness of my evidence and my connecting generalizations is independent of the epistemic perspective of anyone else. And if this is so, the epistemic goodness of my evidence-based

belief that *p* is independent of anyone else's epistemic perspective. This conclusion does not sit well with the claim that the phenomenon of testimonial knowledge instantiates DIR.

Proponents of evidence-based views might react to this by acknowledging that testimonial *knowledge* can depend on the epistemic perspective of others, while denying that the *doxastic justification* of testimonial belief so depends. Perhaps it will be thought that this sort of reaction derives some support from standard Gettier cases. In a standard Gettier case, a brutally external fact or condition renders the truth of a belief too lucky to count as knowledge, but leaves the doxastic justification of the belief unchallenged. The thought might be that what I am highlighting—the role of the epistemic perspective of the source speaker in the supervenience base for the hearer's testimonial knowledge—is only a special case of the more general Gettier phenomenon where external conditions can affect whether a subject knows. But this misrepresents the nature of a hearer's epistemic dependence on her source. For while the proponent of this view claims that we can think of the hearer's epistemic dependence on the source speaker as a special case of a sort of epistemic dependence found in empirically knowledge generally—the dependence involved here is a dependence on the world to ensure that one's belief is not true merely by luck—elsewhere I have argued that this distorts the sort of epistemic dependence that is in play in testimony cases (Goldberg 2010, chs. 2 and 3). Here I only flag this as an unpaid debt of those who favor this more epistemically individualistic approach to the epistemology of testimony: they must defend the idea that the reliability of any particular piece of testimony is epistemically significant only as a potential Gettierizing factor.

So far, I have been speaking of epistemic dependence in connection with testimonial *knowledge*. Is there anything that can be said on behalf of the idea that a hearer's epistemic dependence in testimony cases goes beyond the phenomenon of knowledge? To address this, we must examine the nature of doxastic justification in cases of testimony-based belief. The issue before us is whether variations in speaker *S*'s epistemic perspective can affect the doxastic justification of *H*'s testimonial belief, holding everything else (including all non-epistemic features of hearer *H*) fixed. While traditional epistemologists—not only internalists but even some externalists—will answer this question in the negative, there are several positions in the literature that entail an affirmative answer to our question (for a full discussion see Goldberg 2010). The first is Lackey's (2008) view, on which *H*'s testimonial belief is not doxastically justified unless the testimony she consumed was reliable. On this view, whether *H* is doxastically justified in her testimonial belief that *p* depends on whether *S*'s testimony was reliable, and as we saw above, this sometimes (and in fact ordinarily) depends on whether the belief expressed in *S*'s testimony was reliably formed. The result is that variations in the reliability of the belief *S* expresses in her testimony can affect the doxastic justification of *H*'s testimonial belief. A similar result can be obtained with the position I advocate in

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(Goldberg 2010), where the process-type involved in testimonial belief-formation includes the cognitive processing implicated in the production of the testimony itself.⁶ Yet another position that delivers this sort of result is the “extended reasons” view defended by Owens (2000) and (in a more qualified form) by Schmitt (2006). According to that view, the reasons that S has for the proposition she asserted count as the “extended reasons” H has for the belief he acquires on the basis of accepting that testimony. The result is that the justificatory status of H’s testimonial belief depends on the goodness of the reasons that S had in support of the attested proposition: variations in the quality of S’s reasons can make for variations in the justificatory status of H’s testimonial belief. Each of these views sees the doxastic justification of testimonial belief as depending on cognitive work that is ‘distributed’ between the speaker and the hearer. On such views, the phenomenon of testimonial justification instantiates DIR.

3. DISTRIBUTED CREDIBILITY MONITORING

I have been arguing that at least in some testimony cases, we have a manifestation of one subject’s *direct epistemic dependence* on another subject. (This is uncontroversial in the case of knowledge, more controversial in the case of doxastic justification.) In these cases the hearer is depending on the speaker in particular to have the epistemic goodies that are needed—her testimony must be sufficiently reliable, or must be based on sufficiently good reasons—to enable the hearer to acquire knowledge (or doxastically justified belief). It is interesting to note, however, that the same phenomenon—one subject’s direct epistemic dependence on another—can be seen along another dimension of testimony cases as well.

Before proceeding to cases, let us begin by highlighting what we might be tempted to think is a truism about testimonial knowledge. The apparent truism is this:

- (*) Whether a person knows through testimony depends only on the epistemic goodness of the testimony and on the epistemic goodness of the hearer’s reaction to the testimony.

(*) appears truistic insofar as we assume that (i) the only parties relevant to whether a testimonial exchange results in knowledge are the parties to the exchange itself, and (ii) the parties to a testimonial exchange are none other than the speaker and the hearer themselves. However, in several recent pieces (Goldberg 2005; 2007, ch. 7; and 2008), I have raised doubts about the truth of both (i) and (ii), aiming thereby to cast doubt on (*) itself. Here I will highlight these cases for the illumination they give us regarding the Division of Epistemic Labor.

3.1

Consider first the claim, (i), that the only parties to a testimonial exchange are the speaker and the hearer. In (Goldberg 2005, 2008) I challenged (i) by use of examples that purported to show a third party T playing an ineliminable role in ensuring that the audience A's testimonial belief was safe, sensitive, and/or reliably formed. In both of the cases I offered, this effect was achieved by the relevant "monitoring" role played by T. In effect, T "monitored" the testimony for credibility in such a way that, given T's relation to A in the context of A's formation of the testimonial belief, the result was that A's belief had the modal properties required by knowledge, under conditions in which, were it not for T's playing that role, A's belief would not have had those modal properties. (It is for this reason that we might think of these as cases of "distributed credibility monitoring.")

In one example (from Goldberg 2008), hearer A was a cognitively immature child, and third party T was one of A's guardians, present at the time at which another speaker made an assertion in their collective presence. Assume that A, as a linguistically competent but cognitively immature child, is not particularly competent at distinguishing credible testimonies, and so would have accepted the testimony even if it had been false. Even so, if T is both competent in discriminating credible testimony and such that she would prevent A from consuming the speaker's testimony had she (T) found it untrustworthy (as in: "don't listen to the speaker, he doesn't know what he's saying"), then A's testimonial belief is safe, sensitive, and reliably formed – or in any case is roughly as safe, sensitive, or reliably formed as T's corresponding belief is.⁷ In another example (from Goldberg 2005), the case involved adults. So suppose S testifies that p, under conditions in which there is a defeater D of which S is unaware, whose obtaining makes it lucky that S's belief (and testimony) that p is true; but suppose further that T, though aware of D, has a defeater-defeater D*, where given D*, the truth of S's testimony that p is not merely lucky. Now if A is ignorant of D and D*, but T is such that had D* not obtained she would have cautioned A against accepting S's testimony, then once again A's testimonial belief that p is safe, sensitive, and reliably-formed – or at least as sensitive, safe, and reliably formed as is T's belief that p. In both cases, the fact that the recipient's testimonial belief is safe etc. reflects the "monitoring" role that the third party T has done for H.

If these verdicts are correct, then (*) is false because (i) is false: it is not the case that the only parties to any testimonial exchange are the speaker and the hearer. What is more, we would have our second illustration of DIR: in both illustrating cases the audience A directly epistemically depends (not only on the speaker S but also) on T and the monitoring role that she plays for A. Insofar as T permits A to consume only those testimonies that pass her (T's) own credibility-monitoring filter, the epistemic goodness of A's testimonial belief will reflect the relevant goodness of T's monitoring. This direct epistemic dependence will be seen at the level of knowledge: whether A knows in a given case will

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depend on features of the goodness of T's monitoring, since it is the goodness of T's monitoring that determines whether A's belief satisfies the various modal requirements on knowledge. What is more, if doxastically justified testimonial belief requires relevantly good credibility-monitoring—something many theorists assume,⁸ but which I will not argue for here—we would get the further result that A's testimonial belief directly depends for its doxastic justification on the goodness of T's credibility-monitoring.

Admittedly, the case for these conclusions is only as strong as the arguments I have constructed from these scenarios, and the arguments themselves are not beyond reproach. One thing that has been questioned is my assumption that

- (+) When it comes to assessing the modal properties of A's testimonial belief, it is proper to hold the remote “monitoring” role that is played by T fixed.

Suppose that (+) is not acceptable. Then T's role is like that of any other merely contingent feature of A's local environment. In that case, there will be nearby worlds in which T doesn't play that role, and in these worlds A will acquire false beliefs whenever the testimony she observes is false. This result, of course, would spell doom for my contention that A's testimonial belief is safe, sensitive, and reliably formed. Although I have defended (+) in (Goldberg 2005, 2008), my defense is not beyond criticism (see, e.g., Lackey 2008, ch. 7, and Greco 2009 for critical discussion). Thus it seems that if we hope to illustrate the Division of Epistemic Labor in connection with the role that third parties play in testimony cases, we would do well to consider other, less controversial sorts of case. I turn to one now.

3.2

Above, I said that (*) seems plausible given two assumptions. One of these was the assumption that (i) the only parties to a testimonial exchange are the speaker and hearer; this assumption I have just discussed. So I now turn to the second of the assumptions: that (ii) the only parties who are relevant to whether a testimonial exchange results in knowledge are the parties to the exchange itself. I believe that (ii), too, is false; and in what follows I will be arguing that the case for thinking so provides us with our first illustration of the phenomenon of *diffuse* epistemic reliance on others, DIF.⁹

I begin with a challenge facing any account of testimonial knowledge and justification. All else equal, the epistemic risk of accepting a piece of testimony would appear to increase as a function of the number of testimonial intermediaries and the length of time between each exchange in the chain itself. This idea gets some intuitive support from reflection on the children's game “Whisper Down the Lane”: the further one is from the source with whom the message originated, the more deformed the message one receives. What is more, in real life (as opposed

to “Whisper Down the Lane”) testimonial chains ramify very quickly. In this way, we might think, information deformation propagates rapidly throughout a community. It is surprising, then, that extended chains of testimony can ever succeed in transmitting knowledge. And yet they do; at any rate a good deal of what we take ourselves to know (e.g., regarding remote places and times) comes through such chains. The challenge is to explain how this happens.

No doubt, part of the explanation involves the fixity of the written word and, more generally, the technologies used in information-dissemination. But I submit that the hypothesis of “remote monitoring and policing” also plays a key role in the explanation (Goldberg 2007, ch. 7). Whenever an assertion is made, those who observe the assertion scrutinize it. Those who find the assertion wanting will not accept it; and at least on some of these occasions, they will go so far as to raise objections to the speaker herself. This can prompt her to reconsider her own commitment to the claim, and her role in spreading the information. In this way, members of one’s epistemic community can be seen as playing a “remote monitoring and policing” role vis-à-vis testimonies that are offered in the community. And this, I submit, has a dramatic effect on the spread of information through a community: what gets communicated, the speed with which it passes through the community, and so forth.¹⁰

Now it may well be too much to say that in these cases the members of one’s community are literally monitoring the testimonies for those who come further downstream in the testimonial chain. Even so, the members of one’s community do a great epistemic service to those downstream. To see this, consider that the ease of acquiring a false testimonial belief would appear to increase in direct proportion to the prevalence of false (but otherwise normal-seeming) testimonies in one’s community. (Compare this with the ease of acquiring a false barn-belief apparently increasing in direct proportion to the prevalence of well-constructed fake barns in the vicinity.) Insofar as those who scrutinize testimonies weed out those that are (otherwise normal-seeming but) false, they are in effect decreasing the prevalence of false testimonies in one’s community, and thereby making the surrounding environment one that is more “friendly” to the acquisition of reliable testimonial belief. The “remote monitoring and policing” role played by others thus decreases the burden on individual hearers as they go about managing their reception of incoming testimony.

To see this, consider an idealized community C, with many knowledgeable people who are outspoken in their criticisms of what they take to be unwarranted testimonies. Assume further that few pieces of testimony go unscrutinized for long in C. In that case, the chance that any particular piece of testimony a hearer observes in C will be unreliable is dramatically diminished. Simply put, unreliable testimonies don’t last for long in this community; they wither away and die. Insofar as this effect is systematic and pervasive, it decreases the total number of false testimonies, and so decreases the ratio of false testimonies to total testimonies that an arbitrary hearer is likely to encounter in C. This, in turn, decreases the

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monitoring burden on hearers who want to attain testimonial beliefs in a reliable way. For while hearers in C must still monitor testimonies for reliability, the demands on such a monitoring system, if it is to be part of a testimonial belief-forming process that yields (would yield) a preponderance of truths, is thereby decreased, precisely because a higher percentage of the testimonies themselves are true to begin with.

Like the cases discussed in 3.1, so here too we have a case in which there are parties other than the speaker and hearer whose epistemically relevant acts can have an effect on the epistemic standing of the hearer's testimonial belief. But unlike the scenarios described in 3.1, here (*) is false, not because (i) is false, but because (ii) is false. That is, the third party *is not a party to the testimonial exchange at all*. So what this case suggests is that as hearers we depend for our knowledge not only on those who give us testimony (and those who observe the testimony in our presence) but also on a wide network of people who "police" our epistemic communities so as to ensure that our environment is sufficiently friendly to the acquisition of reliable testimonial belief. This effect is especially noteworthy, I would speculate, in those domains where acquiring the relevant information at first-hand requires a high degree of expertise and specialization. Hearers without such expertise are not in a good position to tell when a piece of testimony is reliable; in effect, such hearers depend on the relevant experts within that domain to separate the wheat from the chaff for themselves, allowing only the most reliable of information to be passed on to those in the community at large.

To the best of my knowledge, this dimension of the epistemology of testimonial belief has never received a systematic treatment. While space prevents me from doing so here,¹¹ I want nevertheless to highlight one aspect of this phenomenon. In particular, the sort of division of labor in play here is a *widely-distributed* one. Where the sort of "remote monitoring" I discussed in 3.1 still involves a situation in which one person, A, directly depends on another, T, in the manner of DIR, the hearer in the present case is not depending or relying on any particular person, but instead is benefitting from the relevant dispositions of the members of her community. Variations in these dispositions, or in the degree of knowledgeable-ness of the members of her epistemic community, can affect the epistemic standing of her testimonial beliefs. Here, in short, we have our first case of *diffuse* epistemic dependence, DIF.

To see this, consider the difference between two subjects, one of whom – call her 'Happy' – is ensconced in C (a community of knowledgeable and outspoken people who do not allow what strikes them as unwarranted testimony to pass), whereas the other – call her 'Unhappy' – lives in C* (a community of lazy, uncritical people prone to rumor-mongering, where testimonies vary a good deal in their quality). The chance that a piece of testimony is true, given that it was encountered (by Happy) in C, is significantly greater than the chance that a piece of testimony is true, given that it was encountered (by Unhappy) in C*. Let Happy and Unhappy be equally good (or bad) at distinguishing reliable from unreliable testimony: given

the same testimonies, they would fare exactly as well as one another in the task of distinguishing those that are reliable. Then it seems patent that Happy will end up with a much higher percentage of true testimonial beliefs, merely in virtue of being in a ‘happier’ epistemic community. What is more, the “modal profile” of their respective testimonial beliefs will differ too. Suppose each accepts a piece of testimony, where the accepted testimonies are both true and equally reliable. Still, it is easy to tell the story so that Happy’s testimonial belief is safe, whereas Unhappy’s is not. Happy’s is safe because not easily would he have acquired a false belief through testimony: there aren’t very many false testimonies going around, having been “weeded out” by the members of Happy’s community. Unhappy’s belief, however, is not safe: easily he could have acquired a false belief through testimony, since false testimonies are rife within his community. But we can stipulate that Happy and Unhappy are doppelgängers, as alike in their internal histories as any two distinct subjects can be. This suffices to show that variations in the knowledgability and outspokenness of one’s community can affect the epistemic status of one’s testimonial belief, even leaving fixed the (non-epistemic) states of the subject and the properties of the testimony she has consumed. In short, here we have a case in which the testimony-consuming subject herself exhibits not merely a direct epistemic dependence on her source but also a diffuse epistemic dependence on her community more generally.

It is interesting in this connection to consider the testimonial case against the credit view of knowledge.¹² As Lackey (2007a, 2007b) has argued, cases of testimonial knowledge appear to be a counterexample to the thesis that knowledge is true belief that is creditable to the subject. Lackey’s plausible contention was that in (at least some) cases of testimonial knowledge, the credit belongs more to the speaker than it does to the recipient. Some proponents of the credit view of knowledge have thought to reply to Lackey’s testimonial case by suggesting that the credit in testimony cases is shared between speaker and hearer (see, e.g., Sosa 2007, 93–7). But if I am correct about the diffuseness of our epistemic reliance in testimony cases, the distribution of credit must go far beyond the speaker and hearer – indeed, beyond those who are present at the testimonial exchange, and in some cases perhaps even beyond the living.

4. DIFFUSE EPISTEMIC DEPENDENCE II: COVERAGE

I want to conclude my discussion of cases with one last illustration of DIF, involving a phenomenon that I have elsewhere called “coverage” (Goldberg 2010, forthcoming a, forthcoming b). Suppose it dawns on K that he hasn’t read a newspaper for over a week, and he wonders about what has happened in the interim. As he is thinking about this, he wonders whether the Prime Minister is still alive.¹³ But then he thinks that of course the PM is still alive, since if she weren’t alive, K would have heard about it by now. Here, K is exhibiting a clear epistemic dependence on her community: she is depending on them for relevant *coverage*.

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In cases of coverage the subject is depending on her community to be such that someone (or ones) would have made the relevant discovery and then reported it in such a way that the information would have reached her.¹⁴ This involves depending on a diffuse collection of others to be good (competent) researchers and testifiers, and on a diffuse collection of still others to reliably disseminate the information through the community.

Once again, it is easy to see how cases of coverage-reliance involve epistemic dependence of the diffuse sort. Consider a subject *K* who resides in a community in which there is a good deal of high-quality coverage, and where the information-dissemination technologies make the relevant information readily available, with the result that the needed information regularly finds its way to those in need of such information. In this situation the epistemic significance of silence (on a matter commonly known to be of great interest to the community) is telling: it is indicative of no relevant new developments. Now suppose that *p* is some proposition it would be reasonable to assume would be of great interest to those in *K*'s community, and that *K* forms the belief that $\sim p$, on the grounds that if *p* were true, she would have heard about it by now. In that case this belief would appear to be doxastically justified, and knowledgeable if true. But we can imagine a variant case, involving a subjectively indistinguishable subject *K**, where, unbeknownst to *K**, the coverage she is receiving is quite poor, and it is most unlikely that relevant developments would be discovered and reported upon. Here the epistemic significance of silence is much diminished. Suppose that *p* itself is some proposition that might easily have been true. Then if *K** were then to form the belief that $\sim p$, on the grounds that if *p* were true, she would have heard about it by now, this belief, being formed under conditions in which *K** is out of touch with the extent and the quality of the coverage she is receiving, would not be knowledgeable even if true. And if the conditions that constitute her poor coverage are standard—if *K** is in a community where coverage in general has been consistently quite poor—then (arguably) *K**'s belief that $\sim p$ is not doxastically justified either.¹⁵ Here we see that by varying certain social practices—those constituting the coverage the subjects are receiving—we can affect the epistemic status of the doxastic attitudes formed through the subjects' reliance on coverage.

5. CONCLUSION

In this paper I have formulated the hypothesis asserting the Division of Epistemic Labor, I have argued that such a division has at least two different 'faces,' and I have presented examples to illustrate the 'faces' in question. There is one salient lesson that I think these cases force upon us: insofar as knowledge is a cognitive achievement, the achievement itself is often far more distributed, and is distributed in more ways, than traditional epistemology recognizes.¹⁶

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NOTES

- 1 The last condition on DIF is meant to distinguish those cases in which S₁ epistemically depends on C merely in virtue of directly epistemically depending on S₂ from those cases in which S₁'s epistemic dependence goes beyond this direct dependence on S₂. (For reasons that will emerge below, it is important to be able to distinguish these cases.)
- 2 In particular, leave all of the non-epistemic features of the subject S as they were. (As noted in the text above, we do not leave all of the non-epistemic features of the community fixed: we vary some of these precisely to see the effects of doing so on the epistemic status of S's belief.)
- 3 It is not a straightforward matter to say what 'sufficiently reliable' amounts to; see (Goldberg 2005 and 2007, ch. 1).
- 4 Here I would locate ordinary evidentialist views (see Feldman and Conee 1985), standard internalist views in the epistemology of testimony (see Fumerton 2007), and views on which testimonial belief is a species of belief based on inference to the best explanation (see Lipton 2007).
- 5 I develop this point at length in (Goldberg 2006).
- 6 Here I assume that facts about the cognitive process by which a speaker produces a piece of testimony constitutes part of her epistemic perspective in the sense characterized in section 1.
- 7 The case for thinking that A's belief is reliably formed must be complicated if the notion of reliability we have in mind is that employed by Process Reliabilism, where the reliability of a belief is a matter of the reliability of the process-type through which it was formed and sustained. On such a view, A's belief is reliably formed so long as the process of testimonial belief-formation itself is an interpersonal one. See (Goldberg 2010) for details.
- 8 The *locus classicus* for this view is (Fricker 1994).
- 9 It should be stressed that while I will be focusing on how variations in the states and dispositions of a relied-upon subject, or of the members of a community, might have a *positive* effect on the epistemic status of a subject's belief, there can also be cases in which such variations have a *negative* effect on the epistemic status of her belief. See (Goldberg 2007, 234–5).
- 10 One thinks here of the relevance of network theory as something that might help us think about (and perhaps model) this phenomenon. I hope to be able to return to this idea in subsequent work.
- 11 I hope to do so in a future paper. What little I have had to say about it is in (Goldberg 2007, ch. 7).
- 12 I thank Jennifer Lackey for suggesting this connection. See also (Goldberg 2009; 2010, ch. 6), where I discuss this at greater length.
- 13 This example is modeled loosely on an example first discussed by McDowell (1994).
- 14 There are a variety of ways in which the information in question might reach the subject K. Perhaps K regularly checks some other reliable source(s) for relevant information. Or perhaps, while K does not regularly check reliable sources for relevant news, she is

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en rapport with various other people who do so, where one or more of her associates would have reported to K had *they* read anything relevant.

- 15 I say ‘arguably’: this will depend on one’s background views about doxastic justification. See (Goldberg 2010, ch. 6).
- 16 I would like to thank an anonymous referee from this journal for helpful comments. I would also like to thank Miranda Fricker, Axel Gelfert, Mikkel Gerken, Alvin Goldman, Peter Graham, David Henderson, Jonathan Ichikawa, Carrie Jenkins, Jesper Kallestrup, Hilary Kornblith, Leslie Marsh, Boaz Miller, Ram Neta, Gloria Origgi, Duncan Pritchard, Dani Rabinowitz, Mike Ridge, and the other members in the audience at the University of Edinburgh (*Episteme* Conference on Cognitive Ecology, June 2010), where this paper was given as a talk. And finally, I would like to thank Jennifer Lackey for her very helpful comments on an earlier draft.

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