EPISTEMIC RESPONSIBLITY AND
THE ETHICS OF BELIEF

JEREMY HENDERSON

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A Thesis submitted to the
School of Graduate Studies
in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

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Abstract

The Ethics of Belief is William K. Clifford's attempt to demonstrate that although one may be morally responsible for their actions, one is also morally responsible for the formation of one's beliefs which gives rise to those actions. For Clifford one is morally responsible for one's beliefs due to their universal duty to question all that one believes. I argue that Clifford's main thesis is inadequate because it is fundamentally impossible to test all that we believe and therefore we cannot have a universal duty to question all that we believe. It is my contention that an ethic of belief is saved when we recognize that there is a central moral virtue of trust inherent to belief formation.

In Epistemic Responsibility, Lorraine Code argues that one is responsible for the formation of their beliefs. Code's notion is distinct from Clifford's in that responsibility is moral but is also epistemic. I state that Code's main thesis is also inadequate because it overlooks the presupposition of trust inherent to belief formation. Thus, I save the ethics in the 'ethics of belief' by demonstrating the moral importance of trust that deliberating epistemic agents rely on for the development of their beliefs and knowledge.

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Introduction to The Ethics of Belief

In William K. Clifford's essay entitled 'The Ethics of Belief' we are given a parable about a shipowner that sent to sea a ship that was unworthy to sail. The shipowner had doubts about his ship but managed to stifle his doubts and let the ship sail. We are first shown that the shipowner in Clifford's parable had "no right to believe on such evidence as was before him" (Clifford, 19) that the ship ought to sail. In my first chapter, through the process of the *Via Negativa,* I will attempt to show what one ought to do in the formation of one's beliefs based on what the shipowner neglected to do. It will be shown that, according to Clifford, we must form our beliefs based on the available evidence. We have a duty therefore to test our beliefs. Also, we ought to formulate beliefs that have or could be tested.

I will present Clifford's claim that we are morally responsible for our actions and we are also morally responsible for what we believe. For Clifford, once one has believed a thing true that one knows is false one has committed an action in one's heart. Therefore, we are responsible for the alterations of our beliefs. Alteration presupposes activity by a deliberating agent who is in control of her decisions and is therefore self aware.

Our beliefs and other mental activities are common property, that is, our beliefs are public affairs. Belief and knowledge therefore involve the community. Acting or believing in this community presupposes that we rely on others and that others rely on us.

Hence, our main duty, for Clifford, is to inquire well, which requires us to test our beliefs.

I will also present in the first chapter Lorraine Code's notion of 'Epistemic Responsibility.' I will demonstrate that according to Code the notion of integrity in our beliefs is analogous to moral responsibility. Thus, the responsibility we have in the formation of our beliefs and in our epistemic activities is like the responsibility we face in our moral activities. The analogy between moral and epistemic responsibility bears on virtue. When one is epistemically responsible one is intellectually virtuous. To be intellectually virtuous, for Code, requires one to acknowledge one's reliance on better informed authorities. Thus, both Code and Clifford can be seen to adhere to the notion that testimony is necessary for belief formation.

For Code, responsible inquiry requires being aware of one's social setting. One must also be aware of their own personal history and aware of the history of one's social setting. One thereby recognizes what one's society has done in the past which allows one to be aware of what one is attempting to achieve now. For example, someone who believes that Christ is the messiah ought to be aware of one's own history with that idea and of how the importance of that idea has shaped one's society.

For both Code and Clifford engagement in community is a necessary element in the formation of responsible beliefs. Much like Clifford's notion of common property, Code has a notion of commonable commodities, in which ideas are open for public scrutiny and are thus relied upon and valued in knowledge acquisition. Thus, for Code, we are able to check a belief to see if it fits into the standards of the community of

knowers. Hence, for Code, coherence is an ideal.

Like Clifford, we shall see that for Code knowing well requires us to understand our sources, understand our epistemic locations, and to understand that how we inquire is as important as the object of inquiry.

Code herself agrees and disagrees with Clifford's notion of the ethics of belief. She states that Clifford misses the extent of the necessity of the epistemic. For Code the epistemic involves all activities while the moral realm involves only practical considerations. The shipowner, according to Code, is epistemically irresponsible because his method of belief formation is flawed. Clifford glosses this type of responsibility over with an overemphasis on morality. According to Code, the shipowner may be ethically irresponsible but he is also epistemically irresponsible.

The first chapter of my thesis establishes what is meant by the ethics of belief by demonstrating that although Code disagrees with Clifford's analysis, they share the notion that one is responsible for the formation of one's beliefs. Showing what it is to be responsible for our beliefs opens the question in Chapter Two of the character of the intellectually virtuous person. Responsible belief formation presupposes persons capable of being responsible.

In the shipowner parable agency presupposes three characteristics of agents. The first is that an agent is of such a nature that she holds and acquires beliefs. From this first element I am able to infer that belief holders are persons. The second states that an agent must know how to investigate beliefs honestly. Hence, we can say that belief holders

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know what they ought to do when forming beliefs. Lastly, an agent must be aware of doubts concerning her beliefs instilled by herself or others. Thus, a belief holder is engaged in the active examination of her beliefs. Therefore, belief holders as agents are persons who know what they ought to do when forming their beliefs. These three characteristics presuppose that agents are self aware, that agents participate in forming their beliefs, and that agents are aware that they participate in the forming of their beliefs.

Hence, we can say of cognitive agents that they are also conscientious agents. As a conscientious agent, we recognize our participation in forming our beliefs. We also form our beliefs in a particular social setting, that is, the society or community we are engaged in. Again, by way of the *Via Negativa* we see what conscientious agents ought to do by what the shipowner neglected to do.

Conscientious agents must by their nature trust their sources, trust their judgement, and trust the community in which they participate. Much like Clifford, Code affirms three characteristics of agency. For Code, knowledge or belief formation is an activity done by persons. Showing that knowledge is activity is based in the Kantian tradition. Yet, Kant is too formal for Code in his assessment of who has knowledge. Code wants us to lose the notion of an ideal observer by allowing knowers to be persons. According to Code, as a person who actively knows, we experience three things. The first is the experience of cognitive activity, that is, we have our subjective life in knowledge seeking. The second is that we recognize, in ourselves and others, that we have a personal history. Thus, we ought to see a responsible knower for where and when

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she is living. What we can know ought to reflect what we have known. Thirdly, we know in relation to a community and culture of which we are a part or in which we engage.

Agents must, according to Code, be good at introspection. Agents or knowers are engaged in a social setting with a social and personal history. For Code, this is a knower's epistemic location. Knowledge seeking is a personal as well as a social activity. Therefore, the recognition of the knower's public and private realms is necessary for responsible belief formation.

Chapter Three over views the notions of trust implied in the work of both Clifford and Code. Epistemic responsibility involves the responsibilities and obligations surrounding our mental activities, including belief formation and knowledge acquisition. We have specific duties such as testing our beliefs when they are in doubt and knowing our sources.

Epistemic responsibility presupposes that we are conscientious agents. Agents must be good at introspection, aware of themselves in a community, and aware of their participation in the community. In Chapter Three I shall demonstrate that the fundamental element that is required for participation in the community, which allows us to form beliefs and acquire knowledge in the first place, is trust. It is my contention that there exists a relationship between knowledge donors (the people who give knowledge) and knowledge seekers (the people who seek knowledge) based in trust.

Donors have duties like keeping promises and being sincere in their dealings which allow fruitful relationships to develop. The promises of donors presuppose a bond

between donors and seekers. This bond itself implies certain duties a donor is obligated to keep. I claim that promises also presuppose commitment to the bond, which in turn presupposes honesty and trust. A trustworthy donor only gives knowledge that she could have. Furthermore, a trustworthy donor knows she is relied upon and therefore donors must stress the importance of investigation.

If donors have a certain obligation then seekers must also have certain responsibilities. I claim that the duties of seekers engaged in belief formation or knowledge acquisition include knowing who our sources are. I also argue that we must move beyond testimony to experimentation. I show that under experimentation a seeker must trust methods of testing. Seekers must trust their judgements of the tests. Seekers must also trust the regulatory function of the community. The community allows claims to be made public, for public criticism.

Code's separation of the responsibility in morality and the responsibility in epistemology would be justified if our epistemic responsibilities did not require us to be trustworthy. I claim that trustworthiness is the presupposition that allows seekers and donors to be successful cognitive agents. Therefore, because we have the duty and responsibility to be trustworthy, the realms of morality and epistemology must converge. I charge that to call this idea of trustworthiness 'cognitive' and not moral would allow us to state that all of our virtues can be seen as cognitive and thus would actually create a distinction without a difference.

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Chapter One:

The Ethics of Belief.

To understand what has been called the 'duty of inquiry' we can begin with a

parable. This parable was first introduced by William K. Clifford in his essay, 'The

Ethics of Belief.' Clifford recounts:

> A Shipowner was about to send to sea an emigrant-ship. He knew that she
> was old, not over-well built at the first; that she had seen many seas and
> climes, and often had needed repairs. Doubts had been suggested to him
> that possibly she was not seaworthy. These doubts preyed upon his mind,
> and made him unhappy; he thought that perhaps he ought to have her
> thoroughly overhauled and refitted, even though this should put him to
> great expense. Before the ship sailed, however, he succeeded in
> overcoming these melancholy reflections. He said to himself that she had
> gone safely through so many voyages and weathered so many storms, that
> it was idle to suppose she would not come safely home from this trip also.
> He would put his trust in Providence, which could hardly fail to protect all
> these unhappy families that were leaving their fatherland to seek for better
> times elsewhere. He would dismiss from his mind all ungenerous
> suspicious about the honesty of builders and contractors. In such ways he
> acquired a sincere and comfortable conviction that his vessel was
> thoroughly safe and seaworthy; he watched her departure with a light heart
> and benevolent wishes for the success of the exiles in their strange new
> home that was to be; and he got his insurance money when she went down
> in mid-ocean and told no tales. (Clifford,19)

The parable is intended to show the shipowner's culpability in and responsibility for the

death of the people on the ship. Yet, its further intention is to show that the shipowner

should not have let the ship sail because he "had no right to believe on such evidence as

was before him." (Clifford, 19) Clifford changes the parable slightly to suggest that even

if the people had lived, the shipowner would still necessarily be responsible for holding a

belief that was inconsistent with the evidence available to him.[1]

The shipowner came to believe in the soundness of his ship by actively believing

against what he knew to be the case.[2] Thus, he neglected to question the original belief

that his ship was unsound and he convinced himself that his ship was seaworthy by telling

himself that it weathered many storms already and that it is likely to do so again. This

type of reasoning based on how future outcomes will resemble what we have known in

the past is reliable; however, the shipowner's original belief focused on how the ship is

old and "doubts had been suggested to him that possibly she was not seaworthy."

(Clifford, 19)[3]

Thus, what's important to note, according to Clifford, is not that the reasoning the

shipowner used is flawed but that he believed in the soundness of his ship when all

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[1]According to Bertrand Russell the shipowner could be engaged in irrationalism. He
states "it may be laid down broadly that irrationalism, i.e., disbelief in objective fact,
arises almost always from the desire to assert something for which there is no evidence,
or to deny something for which there is very good evidence." (Russell, 35)

[2]We can suggest that because the parable is about a shipowner, we are to assume that the
shipowner knows enough about ships to point to evidence of a particularly bad ship if
faced with a bad ship. This will be an important point later in the thesis when I discuss
the issue of others as sources of knowledge. Here it is important to note that we can
regard the shipowner as a source of knowledge about ships.

[3]This point will become focused when I discuss the issue of common property, in which
testimony and the verification of certain types of knowledge occupy an important place in
the acquisition of knowledge for Clifford.

evidence (and other people) pointed to the fact that his ship might be unsound.

According to Clifford, the shipowner had a duty in which he ought to have attempted to

test the available evidence. It's in this realm of testing evidence that responsibility in the

ethics of belief resides.[4]

       The question I want to ask is: how is one responsible for the formation of one's

beliefs? Or, how is one responsible for the active process involved in the creation of

one's beliefs? For Clifford, if one actively changes one's beliefs and effectively creates

new beliefs then the choice and freedom to change beliefs must be available to one.

Thus, one is deemed ethically responsible for the alteration of their beliefs; alteration

presupposes activity by a deliberating agent who controls one's own decisions and is

therefore an agent who possesses self awareness. I am suggesting that agents are aware

that they are changing their beliefs and this is what I think Clifford has in mind in

describing the deliberations of the shipowner. I recognize that sometimes other factors

might change a belief. That is to say a factor like an overpowering authority figure or an

overpowering environment one is engaged in has the potential to change a belief.

However, this case is specific to a deliberating agent who actively possesses belief of a

specific type (positive type A) which she forces into a different kind (negative type A).

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[4]Charles S. Peirce mentions something along the lines of an ethics of belief when he states, "Above all, let it be considered that what is more wholesome than any particular belief is integrity of belief, and that to avoid looking into the support of any belief from a fear that it may turn out rotten is quite as immoral as it is disadvantageous." (Peirce, 21)

Thus, the shipowner has a right to believe based on the available evidence that the ship is unsound and forces himself to believe otherwise. Having a right to believe is comparable to Bertrand Russell's idea of rational opinion. Russell states:

> To begin with rationality in opinion: I should define it merely as the habit of taking account of all relevant evidence in arriving at a belief. Where certainty is unattainable, a rational man will give most weight to the most probable opinion, while retaining others, which have an appreciable probability, in his mind as hypotheses which subsequent evidence may show to be preferable. (Russell, 33)

Clifford will suggest that even if one's belief is fixed one "still has a choice in regard to the action suggested by it and so cannot escape the duty of investigating on the ground of the strength of his conviction." (Clifford, 21) Thus, freedom to choose is freedom to change and also freedom to investigate. Thus, when in question, according to Clifford, we ought to investigate our beliefs prior to the alteration of the beliefs.

Beliefs as Moral Guides

Clifford states that investigation of beliefs is a duty because once one believes, although one has not yet acted on the belief, one has "committed it already in one's heart." (Clifford, 21) Clifford means by this that beliefs are guides to our future. Thus, if we want to be responsible (and this type of want is presupposed much like freedom) then we ought to test the belief to ensure its future as a guide to our future. In other words, as W. D. Falk states:

> Ought is an action guiding concept. It expresses the notion that one is liable to direction by reasons in the case which would motivate one if one

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gave them due consideration. And cannot be *liable* to direction by reasons except in a matter of doing what one is not fully motivated to do already. This is why it cannot be an obligation for one to do what one wants to do anyway. Much as it might become an obligation for one to do it if one ceased to want to. This is also why, when one really wants to do something, the natural question to ask is not, "and *ought* I to do this thing?" but rather, "and *may* I do it?" Or "would there be anything wrong with it?" or "Ought I perhaps *not* to do it?" One looks for possible reasons against, not for possible reasons for. (Falk, 369)

Thus, according to Clifford, we ought to test our beliefs to ensure that they are supported by the evidence before us; alternatives in belief are to be accounted for in light of the same evidence. What we believe guides us, and for Clifford, believing a thing is the same thing as committing an act. Belief then is the reason that directs our motivations; this is why the belief of the shipowner is an irresponsible belief independent of his actions for even if the people survived and his actions produced no morally questionable results then he still believed when he ought not to have believed.

Evidence and Common Property

The question of evidence looms before us in the ethics of belief. We must ask, "what does evidence entail?" Evidence in a belief, for Clifford, is the belief's ability to be treated as 'common property.' According to Clifford, "No simplicity of mind, no obscurity of station, can escape the universal duty of questioning all that we believe." (Clifford, 22)

One notes that the shipowner had a duty as a shipowner to ensure the safety of others and his responsibility lies in the trust they have in him to make the decisions of a

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careful and considerate deliberator with knowledge about ships. The shipowner's

responsibility to test his beliefs is a responsibility that arises out of common property.

Common property is the heirloom of knowledge, which is the accumulation of knowledge

in a given knowledge seeking community. Common property is modes of thought, forms

and processes, and phrases "which every succeeding generation inherits as a precious

deposit and a sacred trust,[5] to be handed on to the next one, not unchanged, but enlarged

and purified, with some clear marks of its proper handiwork." (Clifford, 21)

What makes common property common is its ability to be checked at any time, by

anyone in the community of knowers. Authority and tradition are valid only because they

are continuously and rigorously tested or have the potential to be tested. Thus, we note

the importance of verification and falsification inherent to Clifford's notion of common

property.

Clifford states,

> It is the sense of power attached to a sense of knowledge that makes me
> desirous of believing, and afraid of doubting. This sense of power is the
> highest and best of pleasures when the belief on which it is founded is a
> true belief, and has been fairly earned by investigation. For then we may
> justly feel that it is common property, and holds good for others as well as
> for ourselves. Then we may be glad, not that *I* have learned secrets by
> which I am safer and stronger, but that *we men* have got mastery over more
> of the world; and we shall be strong, not for ourselves, but in the name of
> Man and in his strength. (Clifford, 22-23)

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[5]The importance and integral status of trust will be discussed in my third chapter.

In the parable we saw the shipowner force himself to believe otherwise when others questioned the shipowner's ability to verify evidence. Clifford states, "it was suggested to him that his ship was unseaworthy" (Clifford, 19) which is a clear indication that others had knowledge which could benefit the shipowner and that others were testing their own beliefs about the ship. This is a clear example of the relevance of agents in the social setting, or the community of knowers engaged and involved in the process of common property in attempting to verify beliefs.

The shipowner is responsible because it was his ship and people died while aboard it but he is also responsible because he has a certain way of thinking, that is, he originally thought that the ship was unsound, and he altered his thinking without testing that original hypothesis or belief. The shipowner, according to Clifford, ought to have tested what he originally thought because the original thought was a response to the available evidence. We can also say that his irresponsibility lies in his clear denial of charges against him by his community. This, in turn, is another way to deny available evidence. Not only did he send people to their deaths because he didn't test his original belief but he denied the authority of common property. As Charles Sanders Peirce suggests in his essay 'The Fixation of Belief,' "unless we make ourselves hermits, we shall necessarily influence each other's opinions; so that the problem becomes how to fix belief, not merely in the individual but in the community." (Peirce, 13)

Now, according to Clifford, even if the ship didn't sink, the shipowner is still obligated to test his belief as the evidence suggested that his ship was old and because

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others suggested to him that his ship was not seaworthy. The irritation of doubt[6] must be satisfied not by stifling questions with rationalizations but by "honestly earning it by patient investigation." (Clifford, 19)

Verification of Beliefs

Testimony of exemplars within common property is continually checked, verified, and falsified. If we are looking for a particular truth and rely on the testimony of others, the honesty of a person in her beliefs and her conviction of the truth of those beliefs never helps us verify the truth of those beliefs. Only the testing of beliefs can verify their truth or falsity. Again, what makes common property common is the availability of beliefs to be tested by anyone. As Clifford states,

> The goodness and greatness of a man do not justify us in accepting a belief upon the warrant of his authority, unless there are reasonable grounds for supposing that he knew the truth of what he was saying. And there can be no grounds for supposing that a man knows that which we, without ceasing to be men, could not be supposed to verify. (Clifford, 29)

Thus, we note that for Clifford the character of a person does not determine the truth of her beliefs and that testimony is only valid if the belief can be verified or falsified. If my

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[6]According to C. S. Peirce, the irritation of doubt causes one to obtain a belief and is the sole motive one has to hold belief. He states "The irritation of doubt causes a struggle to attain a state of belief. I shall term this struggle *Inquiry*, though it must be admitted that this is sometimes not a very apt designation. The irritation of doubt is the only immediate motive for the struggle to attain belief." (Peirce, 10) This too is my basic belief and I think this is basically what Clifford's position entails.

belief is based in testimony, I put my trust in the fact that the testimonials concerning the belief have been conclusively verified. Clifford states:

> I may never actually verify it, or even see any experiment which goes toward verifying it; but still I have quite reason enough to justify me in believing that the verification is within the reason of human appliances and powers, and in particular that it has been actually performed by my informant. His result, the belief to which he has been led by his inquiries is valid not only for himself but for others. (Clifford, 29)

He continues to suggest that even if only one person has the means to know the truth of a belief then this is valid ground for us to believe in it. He states, "we have no right to believe a thing true because everybody says so, unless there are good grounds for believing that some one person at least has the means of knowing what is true, and is speaking the truth so far as he knows it." (Clifford, 31) Thus, as long as someone could verify it now or in the future it will become a part of common property.

We note the similarity of Clifford's claim to A. J. Ayer's principle in his text, Language, Truth, and Logic, in which Ayer distinguishes between weak and strong theories of verification. He states:

> A proposition is said to be verifiable, in the strong sense of the term, if and only if, its truth could be conclusively established in experience. But it is verifiable, in the weak sense, if it is possible for experience to render it probable. It will be our contention that no proposition, other than a tautology, can possibly be anything more than a probable hypothesis. (Ayer, 37-38.)

Or, as Karl Popper notes, "The old scientific ideal of *episteme* - of absolutely certain, demonstrable knowledge - has proved to be an idol. The demand for scientific objectivity makes it inevitable that every scientific statement must remain *tentative for ever*. It may

indeed be corroborated, but every corroboration is relative to other statements which, again, are tentative." (Popper, 280) Clifford's notion of testimony in relation to common property can be seen as a weak theory of verification in which it is not propositions that are probable hypotheses but beliefs that are probable hypotheses.

Clifford's aim is to show that it is immoral for one to believe when one has no right to. According to Clifford, "the question of right and wrong has to do with the origin of his belief, not the matter of it; not what it was, but how he got it; not whether it turned out to be true or false but whether he had a right to believe on such evidence as was before him." (Clifford, 19-20) How one formulates one's beliefs is how one creates guides for one's actions. In terms of responsibility we can say that to be responsible requires one to inquire well. To inquire well is to rely on others and in turn be relied upon within the community of knowledge seekers. For Clifford what makes the shipowner irresponsible is his untrustworthiness. When the evidence of a poor ship is overwhelming to a shipowner and overwhelming to other sources of knowledge then we expect responsible shipowners to react wisely based on that evidence. For Clifford, a shipowner who does not react wisely in light of evidence is a morally irresponsible shipowner.

Lorraine Code's 'Ethics of Belief'

According to Lorraine Code, the type of responsibility involved in the ethics of belief is of an epistemic nature and not, as Clifford suggests, a moral responsibility. The

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type of epistemic inquiry we saw in Clifford occurs before the practical application of beliefs necessary for moral judgement. Although she will suggest that epistemic responsibility is analogous to and not distinct from moral responsibility, a separation of the two is required to show the importance of the epistemic realm that is glossed over by a focus on moral matters.

Code claims "that we structure our epistemological reasoning on an analogy with our moral reasoning." (Code, 48) As mentioned, Code's claim is that there can be a separation between our epistemic reasoning and our moral reasoning and how we reason epistemically is analogous or 'like' the way we reason morally.

The analogy here is that there is a cognitive rightness which *appears* to be a moral rightness. Yet, moral worth lies in one's intentions and not in "cognitive validity." (Code, 49) However, one is held responsible[7] for the cognitive validity of one's moral judgement about truth claims. Thus, Code suggests that there is a type of virtue attached to this cognitive activity. By cognitive activity she means "perceiving, remembering, reasoning, knowing, believing, speaking, imagining, daydreaming; activities that have their source in experience of the world and of oneself as part of the world: in awareness and self awareness." (Code, 52)

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[7] Code uses 'responsible' here to allow "emphasis upon the active nature of knowers/believers." (Code, 51)

To understand the analogy between moral and epistemological responsibility better is to understand what Code means by virtue. Virtue for Code is intellectual virtue and her central virtue here is wisdom. For Code,

> Wisdom has to do with knowing how best to go about substantiating belief and knowledge claims, where "best" does not mean "cleverly" or "skillfully" as much as "with intellectual honesty and due care." It entails having a good idea of the extent to which such efforts need to be extended before it is reasonable to claim knowledge or to hold belief. ...Wisdom involves knowing what cognitive ends are worth pursuing and understanding the value of seeing particular cognitive endeavors in context so as to achieve a just estimation of their significance. (Code, 53)

However, she later claims that wisdom must be dropped and 'epistemic responsibility' taken up, due to issues others may have with the term 'wisdom'. This changing of terms seems unimportant because her definition of wisdom is at its basis the definition of epistemic responsibility. Both terms refer to the notion that "for the intellectually virtuous, knowledge is good in itself, not just instrumentally good." (Code, 59)

To be epistemically responsible requires dependence on others and the recognition of the place and circumstance others have within the social setting they are engaged in. She states, "one is dependent upon the cognitive authority of other, better informed, and / or differently specialized knowers whose intellectual virtue clearly *matters*. One of the effects of broadening the notion of intellectual virtue and of making it of interest to epistemologists should be to align its public value more closely with its private value." (Code, 60) This is clearly a notion of testimony. However, this is also what Code calls one's 'epistemic location'. She states that,

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It would be as ludicrous to declare a Soviet scientist irresponsible simply because she or he has not read all relevant, Western scientific treatises on a specific subject (that is, those banned in the Soviet Union) as it would to condemn an ancient Athenian for putting forward theories about heavenly bodies that were not based upon telescopic observation. ...Criteria of responsibility cannot be so harsh as to require one to break too far out of the boundaries drawn around cognitive activity by the environment and by the condition of knowledge in an epistemic community. (Code, 61-62)

I think she means that standards of responsibility only work in terms of the setting one is engaged in. Responsibility can only make sense if we have some notion of what constitutes a responsible knower. Therefore, we rely on others as sources of knowledge because we have an idea as to what is required of our sources of knowledge. Thus, one can only know in relation to the setting that outlines what one can know. One's involvement in the community of knowers presupposes one understands the standards of the community. Thus, only engagement within the realm can set standards for the realm for it is only in the realm that the standards of the realm become known.

Code is discussing our dependence on others as sources of knowledge in the community of knowers. In our quest for knowledge, we rely on knowledge that has come from many different people. Russell suggests that "the opinion of experts, when it is unanimous, must be accepted by non-experts as more likely to be right than the opposite opinion." (Russell, 2) Trust is the basic element to testimony and our awareness that we trust others as sources of knowledge enables us to become better sources of knowledge ourselves. She states that "belief and understanding are products of cognitive interdependence; belief is as infectious and commonable as knowledge; knowledge in any

significant sense of the word, together with the lies and deceptions parasitic upon it, presupposes community." (Code, 176) The purpose or function of authority in knowledge and knowledge itself is to act as a commonable commodity. A commonable commodity is knowledge that is open for everyone. The community of knowers aids in our inquiry by being trustworthy and open. The community does this by producing exemplars in the field of inquiry who can be questioned and therefore trusted to be respectable sources of knowledge.

The intellectually virtuous person acquires knowledge in a responsible way. Thus, the analogy between epistemology and morality, for Code, lies in the responsibility we take for the claims we make. In epistemology we must be responsible for how we go about inquiry and like morality, epistemic responsibility requires us to inquire well. Thus, we have a duty to know well. Code states, "*Knowing well* is essential to the achievement of human well-being, hence cognitive activity *should be* performed as responsibly as possible." (Code, 70) For Code, knowing well requires us to understand our sources, understand our epistemic locations, and understand that how we inquire is as important as the object of inquiry. We are required to check the belief or piece of knowledge to see if it "fits" into an established framework of belief or into the coherent

structure governed by the community of knowers[8] which must require us to test our

beliefs. In morality, the object of assigning values is the attempt to *live well*. Code's

claim is that *knowing well* is an important aspect of *living well*, and thus, knowing

involves fundamental moral values.

Yet, she further claims that epistemic responsibility is not an ethic of belief. She

suggests that it is necessary to separate morality and epistemology because although

"knowing well, preserving an appropriate degree of objectivity, thinking clearly, and

being epistemically responsible are, in fact, moral matters they are not *just* moral

matters." (Code, 68) Her basic claim here is that epistemic and moral considerations are

so interwoven they cannot be separated but principles of responsible enquiry can be

violated apart from the moral consequences that arise from those principles, and

therefore. "moral questions, then, have a central epistemic core." (Code, 69). And yet she

states further that, "these moral and epistemic concerns. then, are not perfectly distinct or

distinguishable from one another." (Code, 70)

She contests that a common but mistaken view asserts all moral agents perceive

and understand situations in the same way and differences in agents only arise in the

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[8] According to the coherence theory of truth a statement or state of affairs is true if it "fits"
into a pre-existing class of statements or a recognized state of affairs. That is, X is true if
it coheres to the established truths. What we are dealing with here could be called a
coherence theory of belief, in which, a belief or piece of knowledge is justified if it "fits"
into a preestablished set of beliefs shared by others we consider sources of knowledge.

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responses to those perceptions. Such a view misses fundamental considerations about the

nature of epistemology:

> Different cognitive capacities and epistemic circumstances create
> situations where experience is structured, and hence the world is known,
> quite differently from one cognitive agent to another. Each time a moral
> judgment is made, then, two parts of a situation must be assessed: the way
> it is apprehended and the action that is performed as a result. The former,
> the apprehension, is a matter for epistemological assessment, and the
> moral dimension of the situation is crucially dependent upon this
> epistemic component. (Code, 69)

Thus, moral assessment of situations is the result of epistemological maneuvers, which

should be performed as responsibly as possible.

Her claim is that knowing well and seeing as accurately as possible are constant

demands while matters of moral concern or moral deliberation are not always so frequent.

Thus, according to Code, "it is possible to be morally in the wrong even when one has

been rigorously scrupulous in one's epistemic endeavors." (Code, 74) She gives us the

example of blackmail. In blackmail the specific settings of situations are used in immoral

ways. There are also morally harmless situations that are epistemically irresponsible.

Code suggests the Flat Earth Society as an example. Flat Earthers are epistemically

irresponsible for failing to acknowledge the history and evidence of geology and

cosmology. Or, as Code states, "they would be judged epistemically irresponsible, for, on

the basis of insufficient, contradictory evidence, they are claiming knowledge or belief

that requires constant rationalization to maintain it; they are not taking available evidence

sufficiently into account." (Code, 74) Indeed, Code continues to suggest that "much of

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epistemic life is concerned with determining the credibility of others and with establishing and maintaining one's own credibility." (Code, 75) Yet, the Flat Earth Society, in so far as such a group does not wreak havoc with public life, will be judged morally harmless. Thus, the contrast between the case of the blackmailer and the Flat-Earther points to the conclusion that it is "always worth while to know well, though the moral import of cognitive activity may vary from case to case and require separate assessment." (Code, 76)

Code's Considerations for Clifford

According to Clifford the shipowner is irresponsible because "he has no right to believe on the evidence before him" (Clifford, 20). According to Code this analysis misses the fact that epistemic moves will always be necessary in our cognitive lives while the morality of the situation only involves our practical lives. Her claim is that this occurs because the "moral import eclipse(s) its underlying epistemic significance." (Code, 73)

As mentioned, Code wants to distinguish moral responsibility from epistemic responsibility. Code's claim is that the shipowner is blame worthy morally for allowing the ship to sail but must be seen as epistemically irresponsible "because of his method of arriving at the belief upon which it is based." (Code, 72)

We saw that there are certain circumstances in which one can be epistemically responsible while being immoral (blackmail) and other circumstances in which one can

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be epistemically irresponsible while being morally harmless (the Flat Earth Society).
Code's basic problem with and criticism of Clifford's analysis is that Clifford fails to
make an adequate distinction between moral responsibility and epistemic responsibility,
and only stresses the moral import while ignoring or "glossing over" the epistemic
maneuvers which all inquiry requires.

Conclusion

It seems that both Clifford and Code agree on the elements inherent to responsible
inquiry. The problem I am faced with in Clifford is his insistence that once one believes
something in one's heart one has "committed it already in [one's] heart." (Clifford, 21)
The problem that I see here is that Clifford denies a distinction between definitely holding
a belief and holding a belief that is provisional or temporary. I am stating that because we
need to test our beliefs when we can our beliefs can turn out to be temporary in light of of
test. Clifford assumes this temporary status of beliefs in his notion of evidence but
neglects it with the idea that one commits an action when one believes it in one's heart.

Some problems I have with Code include her neglect of experimentation in
checking our beliefs to "see as accurately as possible." She needs to explain the
importance of evidence. She claims that:

> Questions about evidence, justification, and validity are persistent
> epistemological questions; my approach carries the indispensable caveat
> that these questions are valid only when they are framed so that they do
> not constrain replies to those that offer definitive, conclusive evidence or
> to those that provide final justification. (Code, 12)

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I also find the place of trust in her analysis problematic. She states the importance of relying on testimony and others as sources of knowledge for responsible inquiry. What is unclear is if this reliance is epistemic in nature. She fails to see that this reliance can only have its basis in the moral virtue of trust and therefore her distinction between the epistemic realm and the moral realm fails. In order for Code's project in distinguishing a moral responsibility and an epistemic responsibility to work she would need to regress back to distinguish moral trust from epistemic trust to clarify how reliance is not based in a moral virtue like trust. In this way she would also need to distinguish other morally laden terms like virtue, care, and concern and explain how they are not moral or are not based in morality.

It seems that the two areas, the moral and epistemological, are separated because there seem to be two activities at play. Yet, both activities require one to be responsible which requires us to inquire well. Inquiring well requires the availability of evidence found in common property or a commonable commodity, allowing the further verification of that evidence. This availability is only possible through a concept of trust based in testimony. The reliability of the test itself does not rely on testimony but does rely on the trust one places in the experiment.

A problem I have with both Clifford and Code is that the notion of trust is glossed over. Both use the term in relation to responsibility without seeing further implications. Both Code and Clifford miss the duty we have to other knowledge seekers in the arena of responsible inquiry. Clifford misses the fact of testimony and Code relies too heavily on

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testimony, thus neglecting the testing of beliefs. Thus, to separate the two realms of activity I am investigating might reveal a connection between these realms based in trust. However, prior to a comprehensive examination of the notion of trust, we first need to investigate what a responsible agent is and the role of such an agent. Therefore, insofar as we have been discussing what it means to be responsible, we need to investigate who is responsible.[9]

Essentially, what I hope I have shown thus far is that an ethics of belief or the duty of inquiry requires one to be responsible for one's investigations. What needs to be understood is that to be responsible is to inquire well. This, in turn, requires us to investigate some of our beliefs, withhold judgement until such an investigation occurs, and be willing to commit to the flames those beliefs that are found to be unreliable or inconclusive independent of how much they might be cherished.

Investigation of our beliefs requires us to understand our sources of knowledge which presupposes we know what a good or credible source of knowledge is and also what counts as good or credible evidence in favour of or against our beliefs. This also presupposes an aspect of community or commonality to investigation. That is, investigation of our beliefs requires that anyone with the belief in question could themselves investigate that belief based in the sources of their knowledge and the available evidence.

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[9]This is the goal of my second chapter.

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I intend, in the next chapter, to reveal what it means for us to be sources of knowledge or what it means to be an agent. I further intend to show that when we have fully investigated the origin of our beliefs, the community as a source of knowledge, the community of responsible agents, and the arena of inquiry we shall find a dependence on trust as the key to not only knowledge acquisition and knowledge accumulation but also to what it means for responsible agents to inquire well.

Chapter Two:

The Importance of an Epistemic Agency in Epistemic Responsibility

In my first chapter I have shown something of the basis of responsible inquiry. For Clifford, this responsibility is grounded in the moral duty one has to inquire well. Clifford suggests that one trusts others through the testimony attributed to common property and that "no one man's belief is in any case a private matter." (Clifford, 21) We saw that for Code the responsibility we find in inquiry is distinct from moral matters. According to Code, moral responsibilities and epistemic responsibilities are not the same. However, to be epistemically responsible requires us to be intellectually virtuous and honest. We also saw that Code's and Clifford's ideas of responsibility in inquiry contained similar elements, such as testimony and shared communal ideas.

In this chapter I shall clarify "who" it is who believes and inquires. This will allow us to better understand how people as belief holders ought to be responsible for the beliefs they hold by acknowledging the culture and community which conditions their beliefs and knowledge. Personal commitment is necessary for persons to be responsible for the beliefs and knowledge they hold and it is this commitment and activity that allows us to call others and ourselves inquiring agents.

The Shipowner as Agent

I hold that agency is best viewed in terms of a wide existentialist view. This view best describes the awareness of a subject or agent in her engagement with her environment and community. Accordingly, agents are self determining beings who are in control of their deliberations. We shall see that the main requirement for agents, in both Clifford and Code, that is their intellectual responsibilities, agree with the existentialist notion of agency. Jean Paul Sartre states: "We are taking the word 'responsibility' in its ordinary sense as consciousness (of) being the incontestable author of an event or an object." (Sartre, 1943:707) Such a notion of agency is a necessary precondition for Clifford and Code as they both rely on the responsibility that epistemic agents have when forming beliefs. This notion of agency stresses the importance of the epistemic activity of an epistemic agent and her responsibility in holding beliefs.

"The peculiar character of human reality is that it is without excuse." (Sartre, 1957:55) We shall see how agents are without excuse, or in other words, responsible for their actions, in the case presented by Clifford of the shipowner's irresponsibility.

For Clifford, it is the shipowner who is irresponsible because it is the shipowner who inquired poorly by holding a belief on insufficient evidence. The shipowner "acquired his belief not by honestly earning it in patient investigation but by stifling his doubts." (Clifford, 19) His belief is acquired by him alone as a self-determining being, as the cause of his behavior and belief, and as the incontestable author of an event or

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belief. He is responsible for the acquisition of such a belief and thus we can say that the failure of his enterprise is without excuse.

Clifford's analysis of the failure of the shipowner shows us three aspects of agency necessary for responsible belief. The first is that the agent must be of such a nature as to be able to acquire beliefs. We are upset at the shipowner because he was in a position to know or find out what is the case. He is a shipowner and we trust that as a shipowner he is conscientious of the welfare of his ship. This is a necessary aspect for agency as it shows that a precondition for deeming people agents is the activity and participation of self-conscious persons, as deliberating agents, in acquiring their beliefs. We can agree with Steven Ross in his text entitled The Nature of Moral Responsibility when he states: "Moral responsibility includes a consciousness of oneself as an agent, capable of effective choice and action, who is subject to influences that may aid or hinder him in achieving his goals." (Ross, 70) We note that Ross is commenting on moral responsibility, which corresponds to the notion of responsibility found in Clifford because, as we saw for Clifford in the previous chapter, the duty of inquiry is a moral duty practiced by inquiring agents. Furthermore, according to Clifford, the shipowner consciously changed his view of the status of the ship, implying he was conscious of that fact.

The second aspect for agency required by Clifford states that the agent who acquires a belief must have knowledge of what it means to honestly earn the belief by patient examination of that belief and knowledge of the grounds of that belief. This

consideration allows us to further show the importance of active conscientious agents within a society as acceptable sources of knowledge and allows us to suggest that holding responsibility requires agents to be aware of how they acquire their beliefs. C.D. Broad defines conscientious activity in his essay titled 'Conscience and Conscientious Activity' as follows:

> An action is conscientious if the following conditions are fulfilled. (i) The agent has reflected on the situation, the action, and the alternatives to it, in order to discover what is the right course. In this reflection he has tried his utmost to learn the relevant facts and to give each its due weight, he has exercised his judgement on them to the best of his ability, and he has striven to allow for all sources of bias. (ii) He has decided that, on the factual and ethical information available to him, the action in question is probably the most right or the least wrong of all those which are open to him. (iii) His belief that the action has this moral characteristic, together with his desire to do what is right as such, was either (a) the only motive component for doing it, or (b) a sufficient and necessary motive component for doing it. (Broad, 506)

Thus, an agent is conscientious when she is engaged in introspection prior to activity and when she decides based on the information available that it is a decent act. Further, one must have the belief that the action has this responsible characteristic and that is why it ought to be done. This permits us to suggest that the shipowner knew what he believed but failed to be a conscientious agent because he reflected on the situation and decided what he should believe. Yet, based in the available evidence, he could not justifiably believe that what he did believe was the responsible belief for him to hold. Therefore, he is irresponsible for failing to fulfill the obligations of a conscientious agent.

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The third aspect of agency we can draw from Clifford's analysis is that the agent must be aware that there may be doubts about her belief, instilled by the agent herself through what Clifford calls 'honest and patient investigation' or introduced by other sources of knowledge. Hence we can agree with Walter Armstrong when he states, in his text Moral Knowledge,

> Where people are behaving perfectly rationally, but are wrong-footed by misleading pieces of evidence, we deny that they know what they believe, even when what they believe is true, because we see that a better acquaintance with the situation could undermine or destroy the belief they have acquired. (Armstrong, 87)

Therefore, we see that the belief of the shipowner is irresponsible because even if he believed his ship was sound, which could be said of him, he still had no right to believe based on the evidence granted him and we can deny that he knew what he believed because he ought to have investigated his claim. Therefore, only through investigation can we know what we believe.

Necessary Awareness

We have seen that an agent is aware that she actively make choices. We have also seen that she must be aware of herself, which requires awareness of her role as a source of knowledge in a public or private capacity within the community of knowers; therefore, the agent must be participating in the community. The shipowner is a source of knowledge in his expertise regarding ships and participation in the community is the responsibility he has as that type of conscientious knowledge source. In other words, as

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Van A. Harvey states in his essay entitled, 'The Ethics of Belief Reconsidered,' "it is not the violation of some universal imperative not to believe anything on insufficient evidence that constitutes the irresponsibility of the shipowner; it is that he failed to fulfill his role-specific obligation to inquire into the seaworthiness of his ship." (Harvey, 195) A shipowner has the duty to inquire about his ship. He is not necessarily a ship safety expert but his duty as shipowner is to know whom to contact for the relevant expertise if he does not have it. Hence, we can say of the shipowner that he failed as a conscientious agent and we can also add that he failed his role specific obligations as a shipowner.

The agent must also be aware of other sources of knowledge. Clifford states, "doubts had been suggested to him that possibly she was not seaworthy." (Clifford, 19) Therefore, as a source of knowledge and as an agent one must recognize others as sources of knowledge and others as agents. That is, an inquiring agent is cooperative within the context of her participation. Respect for sources of knowledge is based in the integrity for knowledge shared by knowers. I hold that the project of verifying our beliefs is communal by its very nature. The verification of a belief is the judgement of an epistemic situation which can never be done alone because knowledge is shared. Hence, one is a "source" of knowledge and not simply a by- product of knowledge accumulation.

Recognizing Agency in Ourselves Through Others

Clifford suggests the necessity for us to consider others as sources of knowledge or others in terms of testimony, when he states:

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> In order that we may have the right to accept his testimony as ground for believing what he says, we must have reasonable grounds for trusting his *veracity*, that he is really trying to speak the truth so far as he knows it; his knowledge, that he has had opportunity of knowing the truth about this matter; and his judgement, that he has made a proper use of those opportunities in coming to the conclusion which he affirms. (Clifford, 25)

Clifford is telling us what we should require of others as sources of knowledge, and in turn, we have gained insight into what we should be as inquiring agents. That is, we require of other agents what other agents require of us. As inquiring agents we need to be aware that the material and testimony of other agents requires trust and the knowledge that one and others are trustworthy, both of which are gained by patient investigation. This, in turn, requires us to trust in ourselves to be sources of knowledge. Ross states:

> One places him*self* on the line in each of his moral actions, for not only is it his judgement that he should act, but it is his own judgment of the validity of that obligation that is embodied in the act. When I have done something wrong, that I thought right, I suffer a double failure: I have failed both in my act, and failed in my evaluation of the act. I have violated my own self in not paying it due heed. I may, for example, have followed the dictates of others in my action, denied my own deepest convictions in my judgment, and discover through subsequent misery and guilt that it was wrong to do so; or I may have followed my own precepts erroneously, which I also discover in the validation which follows. (Ross, 126)

Therefore, when we see the shipowner have doubts about the safety of his ship, and then turn around and rationalize to the point of believing that it is safe, we can say of him that he has failed in his act and his evaluation of that act. Ross continues to assert:

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> The double failure involved in performing an invalid act is of critical importance in moral responsibility. One may fail in one's *act*, and one may fail in one's deliberate choice of the act. The point is that men continually undertake actions in which they may succeed or fail. But only occasionally do men fully *choose* what they do, with sufficient cognizance of the various possibilities before, and the likely consequences for themselves, that risks a double failure as well. In this sense, an irresponsible man can fail in what he does; but a responsible man fails further in his *judgment* as to what he ought to do. (Ross, 126)

Therefore, we see that the shipowner, as an agent, chose to believe otherwise and thus fails not only in what he did but also in his judgment about what he ought to do. Therefore, agency requires introspection about the nature of our acts and about our judgement of how we ought to act.

Thus far, we can say for agency that the duty of an agent is to be aware. An agent must be aware of her sources of knowledge, of the availability of evidence, of her choice to commit to a project, and her participation based in her commitment to the hypotheses of others as sources of knowledge. The agent must be aware of her acceptance of and trust in sources of knowledge and the acceptance of the hypotheses of sources of knowledge. She must also be aware of the trust she places in the results of her own experiments and tests which lead to the formulation of responsible beliefs. These are the requirements of patient investigation. Therefore, the main duty of an agent is to be trustworthy in her dealings with other agents, with her tests and experiments, with her formulation of her beliefs, and thus, agency requires a person to be trustworthy and sincere as a source of knowledge. Hence, the "who" that is held responsible is the trustworthy person.

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Knowing as Activity

Code provides an analysis of the inquiring epistemic agent. She first gives us a rather complicated explication of the creative synthesis of the Kantian imagination. The Kantian view is important though insufficient for Code because it lacks "an adequate context to explain how individual human knowers, as organic creatures, create the products we call knowledge." (Code, 101) However, she states that Kant calls the imagination a 'creative' synthesis which is important for it allows us a way to see "an explanation both of knowledge and knowledge-as-product as inevitably bearing the mark of the knower or would-be-knower." (Code, 102) To call the imagination a creative synthesis "is to emphasize the activity of knowers in making knowledge and in putting it together out of unarticulate or unorganized experience." (Code, 102) Hence, "the knowing process is, above all, active in its creativity." (Code, 102)

She agrees with Kant in the suggestion that knowers contribute to knowledge. However, she claims that this contribution is not, as Kant would argue, fixed. She suggests "it is persons who know - not abstract, isolated intellects, understandings, imaginations, or faculties of reason." (Code, 101) Persons know and persons do not have a fixed cognitive life, due to the complexity and novelty at work in human lives.

Concentration on the fixed cognitive contribution in knowledge leads to three factors or aspects of cognitive activity going unnoticed. The first factor she calls *Erlebnis* or the experience of cognitive activity. Persons recognize their own cognitive activity

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and this personal experience of cognition is actively lived through. That is, there is an awareness persons experience within their own cognition. Thus, we know when our cognition is at work by living through it and experiencing cognition in our lives. The second element is the personal history of the individual. Persons are constantly and actively remembering their personal histories in acquiring knowledge by actively remembering how they acquired knowledge in the past. This idea of recollection can let us know how we are to acquire knowledge in the future and lets us know what this future knowledge might look like. As Clifford suggests, "what we do not know is like what we do know." (Clifford, 34) The third aspect is the mixture of the communal, historical, and cultural factors of cognition actively gained by interaction and communication. This is the person's makeup in terms of her knowledge and cognitive history influenced and constrained by communal and cultural factors, such as politics, cultural conventions, and families.

These aspects are important for agency because to understand the active deliberation process of persons gaining knowledge is to understand the active epistemic agent. These three factors give us a way to humanize knowers and allows us to discuss agents as people who are living through their development in a certain time, in a certain place, in a certain space.

Knowers as Persons

We saw that for Code, as well as for Clifford, self knowledge is integral for responsible knowledge acquisition. Code states that only persons know; therefore, if only persons know then "one must know oneself to achieve a just estimation of the extent to which one does know, believe justifiably, deceive oneself, or fail in epistemic responsibility. ...[F]or the intellectually virtuous, self knowledge is as important as, and indeed complementary to, knowledge of the world. To achieve it, one must presumably, be good at introspection." (Code, 57) Therefore, not only must one be self aware, one must be competent at introspection. It must thus be important for agents to know that they can and do know. Kant also stresses the importance of self consciousness when he states that

> Self consciousness which, while generating the represented 'I think' (a representation which must be capable of accompanying all other representations, and which in all consciousness is one and the same) cannot itself be accompanied by any further representation. The unity of this apperception I likewise entitle the *transcendental* unity of self consciousness. (Kant, B132)

For Kant one is self conscious in all of one's thoughts. That is to say, self consciousness accompanies all of our of modes of thought, which must include our beliefs. Hence, introspection of our beliefs only makes sense in light of the fact that we are self conscious entities.

However, according to Code, this misses the "primacy of practical action for human beings." (Code, 111) That is, Kant overlooks the activity of persons in their

attempt to be self conscious and introspective. She declares that "a study of the nature and the role of individual cognitive agents as selves and as members of knowing communities promises to offer a more adequate understanding of the conditions that make knowledge possible than is achievable in attempts to formulate pure, formal principles of knowledge, as Kant does." (Code, 100) Thus, what is needed is to understand the community and situations knowers are engaged in to better understand what a knower is and thus to better know the circumstances necessary that allow the possibility of knowledge acquisition.

Persons as Social Beings

Our experience is of a changing and developing community in which we are knowledge participants. We attempt to gain knowledge and we attempt to relay knowledge but we do so in a social and historical context. Code proclaims that "affective, social, and historical 'location' are integral parts of cognitive activity; and there is no neutral observation point from which this evaluative process can be undertaken, for all would-be knowers, epistemologists among them, are subject to the same constraints." (Code, 113) Therefore, the classical passive observer or ideal knower who sits outside and supposedly can judge affairs without bias is a flawed conception because a knower's 'location' is essential for all knowledge acquisition. These locations allow us to develop based in the accumulation of knowledge generated by years of prior experience and learning. Knowers know only through their locations. That is, what knowers know is

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regulated by their socio-historical context. Code explains that "Clearly there are factors in a person's nature, and in the environment and epistemic community where cognitive endeavors take place, that have crucial bearing upon the form intellectual virtue can take." (Code, 61) The social nature of human existence is thus relevant to our knowledge acquisition.

We have already discussed the importance of sources of knowledge and testimony in our locations; however, testimony opens up a broader notion of consensus. Code states that "since it is only possible rationally, to create a world that fits into a broader social context (in all but one's most private actions), the relevance of consensus to acceptance and justification of knowledge claims is apparent. Consensus thus viewed is one condition for establishing that something is true." (Code, 114)

Consensus is only possible if agents are honorable, can agree, and possess integrity. Code states, "the success of the entire cognitive enterprise is dependent upon something like an honorable and cooperative, if tacit, agreement between information purveyors and knowledge seekers." (Code, 65-66) Agents are required to be intellectually honorable in their dealings with other agents, they must have fidelity to the unspoken contract between a knower and knowledge seeker.

Code's distinguishes between what makes an agent and what makes a good agent. Both biological and social factors determine agency. For Code, it is only persons who are aware of their active cognitive lives, yet, it is the communities the persons engage in that shape the action of their cognition and their beliefs. After the stress is placed on persons

as knowers, there is a necessary attribution of characteristics such as wisdom or prudence to persons who attempt to know well which can only be judged based in the knower's location. For Code these are intellectual virtues that one develops over the course of one's cognitive life. It is the development, awareness, and want of these virtues that sustain the success of the knowledge seeking enterprise.

Problems

If one attempts to draw from a position certain points that are not explicitly made, one may overstep one's boundaries and say too much. However, with an analysis like Clifford's that often merely hints, one is forced to draw out points for consideration. The lack of explicit discussion surrounding agency in Clifford poses problems. He does, of course, say how one ought to act in order to inquire well but he is less clear on "who" it is that ought to inquire well. It is somewhat problematic to suggest that one inquire well without explicitly placing qualifications on the "who" it is that ought to inquire well. That is, Clifford's analysis deals with the characteristics of an ideal observer without directly involving the character.

Code, however, is precise on "who" is epistemically responsible. However, the problem she faces is the separation she must make between an epistemic agent and the moral agent. Although this part of her analysis is not explicit, she implies that requirements of epistemic agents are "like" but not identical with the requirements of moral agents. This implication is necessary unless she chooses to separate the agent from

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her responsibility, which she simply cannot maintain considering that her position depends on the responsibilities faced by persons who inquire.

If she admits the above claim then I can find no concrete distinction between a moral agent and an epistemic agent and charge Code with creating a distinction that has no difference. Both agents, functionally, require the same awareness and understandings and both types of agents must essentially share and exhibit identical virtues. Her distinction between moral and epistemic responsibility is flawed, not only due to the failure to explain the analogy between the epistemic and the moral, but because a responsible active inquiring agent must have moral virtues, such as trust, which cannot be emptied of their moral content.

An Impression of Agency

Between Code and Clifford, we are granted a look at what an epistemic agent is and we can begin to understand what is meant by epistemic agency. There are four basic features that are attributable to an epistemic agent.

The first quality we note is that an epistemic agent must have the freedom and possibility to acquire beliefs and knowledge. This feature of epistemic agency allows us to state that agents are authors of their beliefs and actively pursue knowledge. This feature states that only certain types of entities can be agents, namely, persons. If we allow that persons are knowers and believers, we must also allow the importance of the human aspect to knowing and believing. Thus, only persons can be deemed epistemically

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irresponsible. This forces the second quality of epistemic agency. If agents are people who know and believe then we must say that an attribute of epistemic agency is awareness.

Awareness includes many things, as we have seen in both Clifford and Code. We note both agree that self consciousness and introspection are necessary for agency. This includes but is not limited to the awareness an agent must have in her role specific commitments within a community. Thus, she must also be aware of the roles of other, maybe even better informed, sources of knowledge in her community. Therefore, an agent must be aware of the community in which she engages. To be epistemically responsible requires one to engage with sources and also requires introspection with regard to what we have learned through testimony, presupposing awareness of our engagement within the community. Thus, the second element of epistemic agency leads into the third.

If an epistemic agent is to be aware of her community, she must participate in that community. Commitment and engagement in a community and in the community of knowers must be both known to the would be knower and known to others in that community. This is because engagement within a project leads to commitment to the project. Clifford's shipowner was deemed irresponsible because he neglected his role and commitment to his projects.

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If engagement in a project implies commitment to the project, then commitment itself must reveal a type of social bond[10] within the community at large and within the community of knowers. A bond here must be viewed not as a contract entered into by humans but a recognition of their commitment to know. Persons take up the project of knowledge by believing. Once one decides to accumulate knowledge by believing and addresses other sources of knowledge one enters into a contract based in one's cooperation with these other sources of knowledge in the project of knowledge acquisition. A bond thus viewed requires essential virtues of an agent including honor, integrity, and trust.

In my next chapter I shall investigate the main features of trust and show the importance of trust in knowledge seeking. Further, I will attempt to show that responsibility in the epistemic realm cannot be, as Code suggests, separated from responsibility in the moral realm. I thus intend to show that trust is a virtue for knowledge seekers without which knowledge itself might very well be impossible.

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[10] I shall discuss the notion of a bond at length in my third chapter.

Chapter Three:

The Role of Trust in the Ethics of Belief

There is a central moral core to the ethics of belief. In this chapter I will show that this central moral core is trust. The quality that best describes an intellectually responsible agent is trust.

We have seen W. K. Clifford state that belief without sufficient evidence is always wrong and we ought to test all of our beliefs. He states this when he claims "it is wrong always, everywhere, and for anyone, to believe anything upon insufficient evidence," (Clifford, 24) and further when he states, "No simplicity of mind, no obscurity of station, can escape the universal duty of questioning all that we believe." (Clifford, 22) Thus, if a belief has not been investigated it is morally wrong to hold it. Lorraine Code argues in Epistemic Responsibility that holding and acquiring beliefs is not an ethic of belief but an epistemic responsibility. She claims that belief formation is based in the epistemic character of an agent. This type of character is analogous to a moral character. I intend to show that the moral aspect of belief holding, that is, an ethic of belief, is saved when we understand that trust in the process of investigating our beliefs can only be a moral affair. Examples of trust in investigation include trust in testimony, trust in the results of experimentation, and the trust placed in a community of knowers.

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I intend to analyze the work of both Clifford and Code in relation to trust for it is my contention that both presuppose this important aspect of knowledge but do not fully inquire into its moral significance. I further intend to show that although Code attempts to formulate an analogy between moral responsibility and epistemic responsibility, this analogy is inadequate. This is because she never actually distinguishes between the two realms. Indeed, the reader finds himself constantly asking: how is this an analogy? Thus, I argue that Code creates a distinction without a difference when contrasting moral elements with epistemic elements.

Introduction and Intent

Clifford and Code hold similar notions concerning how our beliefs are to be investigated. Both claim there are methods of investigation that we must perform for our beliefs to be established. The establishment of beliefs can be seen as a form of epistemic justification. Therefore, both Code and Clifford affirm a notion of reliabilism. The main proponent of reliabilism is Ernest Sosa. We are given the main requirement for justification by Sosa when he states, "According to the reliabilist, the main requirement for epistemic justification is roughly that a belief be produced or caused in a way or via a process that makes it objectively likely that the belief is true. Such a mode of belief production is thus a *reliable* source of true beliefs." (Sosa, 25) The idea of belief production necessarily presupposes reliance on others; belief production is never done alone.

Both Clifford and Code claim that within the process of belief formation there is a distinctive relationship between knowledge seekers and knowledge donors. Knowledge donors are expected to transmit coherent and explainable knowledge to knowledge seekers. That is, knowledge is given and shared in knowledge acquisition. Knowledge in this vein of giving and receiving can thus be seen as a gift. This notion of a gift giving community of knowers is apparent when Clifford suggests that beliefs are common property and are "an heirloom, which every succeeding generation inherits as a precious deposit." (Clifford, 21) I would suggest that if this is the case then there must be some form of coherence in knowledge networked through individual minds allied in social coherence. The essential interconnectedness of knowledge is best explained by the giving and receiving of knowledge through the structure of a community.

> Let us say briefly that the task of science is to describe and explain the physical world, or more generally, to develop an integrated body of theory that can account for the facts, and predict them. Even such a brief prospectus points toward several reasons why ideas might be treated as gifts, the first being that the task of assembling a mass of disparate facts into a coherent whole clearly lies beyond the powers of a single mind or even a single generation. All such broad intellectual undertakings call for a community of scholars, one in which each individual thinker can be awash in the ideas of his comrades so that a sort of "group mind" develops, one that is capable of cognitive tasks beyond the powers of any single person. The commerce of ideas - donated, accepted (or rejected), integrated - constitutes the thinking of such a mind. (Hyde, 80)

The giving of the gift of knowledge requires an intricate network of dealings within the knowing relationship. This network of dealings pivots around three types of trust inherent to the relationship. First, we have the relationship between knowledge

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provider and knowledge seeker, in which a provider gives knowledge to the seeker. If the knowledge provider or donor gives, then the knowledge seeker receives. Second, we shall see that one is responsible for one's judgments about how one gains information (through investigation and testimony) and thus how one uses that information. Trusting our information is necessary, for as we shall see, reliance on sources of knowledge is rarely enough for justification and rarely enough to fall under the heading of knowledge.

Trust is communal. Knowledge is shared as a commonable commodity or as common property. We shall see that the function the community serves is regulatory. That is, the community serves as a filter by way of publicity.

Trusting our Sources: The Importance of Veracity and Promise Keeping

The first relationship we must look at is the relationship between knowledge donors and knowledge seekers. As mentioned this involves the responsibilities the knowledge provider has to the knowledge seeker. Essentially, the knowledge provider must be a person of veracity. That is, she must be honest and trustworthy.

A trustworthy person feels obligated to keep her promises, to be true to her word, act with nobility, and to ensure that other knowledge donors are doing the same. To understand the notion of trust we can first examine the notion of promises. To see the importance of promises in examining trust we look to David Hume when he declares, "When a man says *he promises anything,* he in effect expresses a *resolution* of performing it; and along with that, by making use of this *form of words*, subjects himself

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to the penalty of never being trusted again in case of failure." (Hume, 574, 1985) When

one promises anything, one states that one has an obligation to keep that promise. A

broken promise reveals that one cannot be trusted and whoever makes a promise assumes

that if one breaks a promise one cannot be trusted again. Annette Baier's explanation of

Hume is enlightening:

> In his famous account of what a promise (and a contract) involves, Hume
> strongly implies that it is an artificially contrived and secured case of
> mutual trust. The penalty to which a promisor subjects himself in
> promising, he says is that of "never being trusted again in case of failure."
> The problem which the artifice of promise solves is a generally
> disadvantageous "want of mutual confidence and security." It is plausible
> to construe the offer whose acceptance counts as acceptance of a contract
> or a promise as at least implicitly including an invitation to trust. Part of
> what makes promises the special thing they are, and the philosophically
> intriguing thing they are, is that we *can* at will accept *this* sort of invitation
> to trust. (Baier, 245, 1985)

When a donor of knowledge promises anything at all, she is fundamentally inviting us to

trust her as a donor of knowledge. Assurance of trust gives seekers an opportunity to

engage in the community of knowers. Thus, a promise made by a donor is the promise to

be trustworthy so knowledge can be fruitful.

Sincerity

Gift giving and the heredity of knowledge both imply some form of addition to an

existing body of knowledge. A good word to use for this heredity is sincerity. The word

sincere is

derived from the Latin word *sincerus* and first meant exactly what the Latin word means its literal use - clean, or sound, or pure. One spoke of sincere wine not in a metaphorical sense, in the modern fashion of describing the taste of wine by attributing some moral quality to it, but simply to mean that it had not been adulterated. To speak of sincere doctrine, or the sincere religion, or the sincere Gospel, was to say that it had not been tampered with, or falsified, or corrupted. (Trilling, 12-13)

In relation to a donor of knowledge we expect such a donor to give us knowledge that is uncorrupted. Trudy Govier, in Social Trust, states that a donor must be self conscious in her expertise and thus be pure in her dealings with seekers:

To acquire knowledge from experts, we must believe what they say, and to do this we must trust them. It is not enough to assume the theoretical competence of an expert: we must trust him or her to be a person of integrity, with good judgement. The trustworthy expert must have enough self-consciousness to be aware of the limits of her expertise and must resist the temptation to make confident pronouncements about matters on which she does not have secure knowledge. She must be honest and uncorrupted. (Govier, 69)

The Bond

Being honest implies the recognition a donor has for a seeker's particular project. When a donor accepts her role as donor, the donor and seeker are engaged in a bond or fellowship based in the recognition that donors of knowledge have had projects of knowledge acquisition in the past and seekers are engaged in projects of knowledge acquisition in the present. Thus, one is honest for the sake of knowledge acquisition and for the sake of the accumulation of knowledge.

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A knowledge donor thus places herself in fellowship with knowledge seekers. Code has a notion of tacit agreement in epistemic responsibility that is presupposed in the relationship between knowledge donors and knowledge seekers: "Our sense that it is reasonable to assume that people will provide accurate information, to the best of their ability, is based on the presumption that there is a general agreement to do so, even where there is no law involved." (Code,179)   Code is suggesting that there is a bond that is not directly stated but that is understood between people who want knowledge and the people who give knowledge, in the same way that when I make a promise I enter into some form of arrangement to keep the promise or never be trusted again. She declares that "The success of the entire cognitive enterprise is dependent upon something like an honorable and cooperative, if tacit, agreement between information donors and knowledge seekers." (Code, 65-66) Thus, a presupposition in knowledge acquisition is this notion of a tacit agreement between knowledge seekers and knowledge donors.

Commitment to bonds of obligation in knowledge seeking is thus how one is deemed reliable. According to Talcott Parsons,

> An established state of a social system is a process of complementary interaction of two or more individual actors in which each conforms with the expectations of others in such a way that alters reactions to ego's actions are positive sanctions which serve to reinforce his given need-dispositions and thus to fulfill his given expectations. (204-205)

In other words, the social system is such that relationships are beneficial to the parties engaged in those relationships. Thus, a bond or agreement between donors and seekers benefits both parties. A seeker receives reliable knowledge and the reliable donor

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acknowledges the accumulation of knowledge. The reliability of a donor is judged on the

basis of the donor's history, testimony, experiments, and engagement or acceptance in the

arena of knowers.

What Can a Donor Give?

The responsibility of a donor of knowledge is to judge what kind of knowledge

she can give. A donor ought not to give or pass on falsehoods. One ought to only give

what one knows. Any other knowledge given is unreliable and thus the donor is

irresponsible. Hopefully, our donors know this, and also know that seekers are in a

delicate position of dependence and trust. As Paul Faulkner eloquently explains:

> Insofar as testimony functions to transmit justification, the dependence of
> the audience upon the expert must be construed in epistemic terms. The
> acquisition of expert knowledge puts the audience in a position of
> epistemic dependence: the audiences's acquisition of knowledge is a
> consequence of the speaker's expression of knowledge. This epistemic
> dependence implies trust since the speaker's expression of knowledge is a
> matter of good will. The audience is thereby vulnerable to the speaker's
> decision to express what he knows. (Faulkner, 33)

Clifford advises donors of knowledge to understand that what they say can have

dire consequences. He also suggests that donors of knowledge must understand that they

are relied upon as sources of knowledge and that "No real belief, however trifling and

fragmentary it may seem, is ever truly insignificant, it prepares us to receive more of its

like, confirms those that resembled it before, and weakens others." (Clifford, 21)

Therefore, when one is in a position to advise, one must know that one's advice or

knowledge can and will be passed on and that one ought thus to be responsible in what and how one believes.

Donors Place Seekers on the Path to Investigation

If one is considered a source of knowledge by testimony, this requires a responsibility of donors of knowledge to be honest simply because one knows that one is in a position in which one is relied upon. It would be shameful of an academic to give information that she just could not have (due to restrictions in her academic background or basic restrictions of human knowledge) but it would also be in her best interests to not let seekers believe certain information based on systematically misleading expressions, attitudes, or beliefs. It is in the interests of donors to not give false information because her very credibility can depend on the success of the seeker.

Testimony can be fraught with difficulties. A problem with testimony is that once we receive testimony we can classify it by way of testimonies we have received in the past. We tend to classify a new claim as outrageous when it conflicts with other held testimonies and vice versa. Thus, a new source is judged based on previous sources. Paul Faulkner states:

> We receive testimony from different sources and testimony to different topics and we distinguish amongst these sources and topics. We might, for instance, be more likely to believe priests than lawyers, and people talking about ordinary matters than people talking about extraordinary matters. Allowing that content may be identified as a particular topic, and named individuals as particular sources, testimony could be generically typed in terms of the particularity of its source, topic and combination

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> thereof. Acceptance might then be explained by our possession of general beliefs as to the credibility of types of testimony thus distinguished; credibility being, on occasion, directly inferred from these general beliefs. (Paul Faulkner, 32)

Testimony can also gain plausibility by being repeated:

> In addition to our general beliefs as to the credibility of testimony - beliefs formed prior to the encounter with a given testimony - the encounter of testimony may provide a reason for acceptance. Thus, and for instance, initially implausible testimony may gain plausibility with its telling. Such encounter may then instil the belief that *this testimony*, identified demonstratively, is credible. (Paul Faulkner, 32)

A believer will believe friendly testimony based on prior beliefs. When confronted with this testimony they will believe it, not necessarily based in anything relevant to the testimony, but because they have these prior beliefs.

To avoid or reduce errors, a donor of knowledge ought to foster the spirit of investigation into the claims that are made by the donor himself. Thus, a donor can honestly place a seeker on a path towards acceptance of the donor's claims. This allows donors the ability to be consistently credible because their testimony is not relied upon without investigation (or as we shall see the possibility of investigation) and investigation would be the logical conclusion to testimony. However, we can ask: why would we place our trust in sources of knowledge in the first place if we are required to test their claims anyway? We shall see that this question is answered when we look at the notion of verification found in Clifford.

Seek and Ye Shall Find: Searching with Trust, The Honesty of a Seeker

The knowledge seeker faces the responsibility to be trustworthy. The seeker is epistemically dependent on other better informed sources whom she trusts to point her in the right direction in her inquiry. The knowledge seeker must place a great deal of trust in the knowledge donor. "Knowledge based on what other people tell us presupposes trusting other people. Accepting evidence from others is reasonable only to the extent that we regard them as reliable, competent, and sincere. And this is to say that it is reasonable only to the extent that we trust them." (Govier, 51)

The question that faces any would be seeker is: what am I to believe? We know that Clifford will suggest we investigate and test all of our beliefs. This implies that I must care about what I am told and about what I tell others. Clifford states:

> Habitual want of care about what I believe leads to habitual want of care in others about the truth of what is told to me. Men speak the truth to one another when each reveres the truth in his own mind and in the other's mind; but how shall my friend revere the truth in my mind when I myself am careless about it, when I believe things because I want to believe them, and because they are comforting and pleasant? (Clifford, 23)

In order to cherish the truth and to be responsible presupposes that I am careful in my thoughts. I believe things because they are so and not because I want them to be. It is our duty for Clifford to find evidence in favor of or against our beliefs and abandon or revise them in terms of that evidence.

Clifford *seemingly*, therefore, condemns the notion of testimony. He suggests that testimony alone is never enough: "We have no right to believe a thing true because

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everybody says so, unless there are good grounds for believing that some one person at least has the means of knowing what is true, and is speaking the truth so far as he knows it." (Clifford, 31) Clifford is giving us qualifications for the character of a good believer. Clifford claims that one ought to pass on right belief, and one ought to care about what one believes because one is in a position to be relied upon. Although Clifford *seems* to suggest that testimony is irresponsible, the clause "unless there are good grounds for believing that some one person has at least the means of knowing what is true" qualifies the notion of testimony by stating that testimony can work if there is somebody who is in a position to know.

The pursuit of knowledge requires veracity on the part of the knowledge seeker. It is the responsibility of the seeker to ensure that the testimony she acquires comes from a trustworthy source who is in a position to know what she claims. Knowledge seekers can come to know trustworthy sources by understanding what a source is capable of, the expertise of the source, the position of the source, the past experiments of the source, and the overall acceptance of the source in the community of knowers. In other words, according to Kieron O'Hara,

> When we encounter an expert, (or any person we consider a source), we need to trust that he is who he says he is, that he has undergone the requisite quantity of training, and that his expertise will work. This is not always easy to affirm, so trust is inevitable if we want expert services. We have to trust that the expert possesses the expertise, that he will apply it carefully and rationally, and that - in return for his fee - he will apply the expertise in *our* interest, and not in his. (O'Hara, 161)

Since we as seekers want our sources to apply their expertise in our interest, it is up to us to understand how to choose a source. Thus, we must have good judgement and fine-tuned decision making skills.

The character of a seeker can determine what it is that she can know. According to Code, "A broadened notion of intellectual virtue will impinge upon and to an extent, even dictate the nature and reasonable scope of acceptable evidence – and justification-seeking procedures, while shifting focus to encompass the character of the seeker as well as the nature of the procedures themselves." (Code, 66) Code is stressing that the character of a seeker can determine justification seeking procedures.[11] She calls this a broadened notion of intellectual virtue because many philosophies stress the importance of bracketing the character of the seeker to gain knowledge. Essentially, for Code, the seeker has an explicit duty to knowledge-seeking that involves attaining specific virtues of character like having good judgement; part of this duty is to know whom they consider to be a source of knowledge.[12] For Code, it is the duty of a seeker to investigate not only her own beliefs, but the sources of those beliefs. This is due to the inherent risk involved in trust. That is, one ought to investigate who one's sources are to make it more likely that one's source is in a position to know, thus, decreasing the risk involved. Although one can never completely eliminate the risk that is involved in trusting sources one can be

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[11] We can see more of the role that personal character plays in knowledge for Code in her discussion of gender in What Can She Know, or Rhetorical Spaces.

[12] According to Code, "To believe a speaker is, then, to regard him or her as a source of knowledge." (173)

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fairly accurate in whom one should not trust, thereby revealing who one can trust. Hence, according to Code, "given the centrality of trust, a fundamental task facing would-be knowers at every stage of cognitive life is to learn who can be trusted." (Code, 175) The primary way to learn who can be trusted is to find out if your source is in a position to know. According to Code, "prominent among my considerations in assessing a knowledge claim is evidence about whether the person at its source is in a position to know." (Code, 39)

Though seekers and donors of knowledge presuppose a tacit agreement, seekers must learn who can be trusted, who their sources are, and if those sources are in a position to know the things that they claim. Hence,

> When I ask you to tell me something or explain something to me, I assume you will reply in good faith, giving as accurate an account of your knowledge as is appropriate to the situation. If I trust my own ability to assess the boundaries of your knowledge, I may believe you. On the basis of what you tell me, I can claim knowledge in turn, particularly if it is a specific piece of information such as the opening of the bank or the score in a football game. (Code, 173-174)

The responsibility is the seeker's in determining whether what donors say can be trusted based on the seeker's knowledge of the donor's character. Thus, even though donors have specific duties to keep promises, seekers have duties to what they believe based on their knowledge of where those beliefs come from. Code states:

> To believe that you are (or that John is) believable, hence that the knowledge you impart can be taken as such, I must make a just estimation of your epistemic "qualifications," particularly when I ask you more than the score in a football game. The onus of justification, therefore, is at least as much upon the validity of my knowledge about you (and about myself) as it is upon my claim to know p, because you have told me. (Code, 174)

Thus, the notion of trust reaches beyond the notion of trusting sources to trusting ourselves and our judgement about our sources of knowledge. What this does according to Code is put me in a reasonable position to know. Code states that "what has taken place between us (my asking you about X) puts me in a reasonable position to claim that I know. It does not provide a guarantee that I know that I know." (Code, 174) One could approximate a guarantee for knowledge by conducting a test for the claim itself. However, there may be claims that we just cannot test due to our inability, lack of knowledge, or some other incompetency. However, its important to note that being in a reasonable position to know requires interdependence between knowledge seekers and knowledge donors:

> Scientists themselves must rely heavily for their facts upon the authority they acknowledge in their fellow scientists. They use the results of sciences other than their own and of other scientists in different areas of their own field, results they may feel neither called upon nor competent to test for themselves. Already the picture of a complex network of interdependence is becoming clearer. For this interdependence to be workable, there must be a tacit basis of trust and trustworthiness. (Code, 230)

The point is not that only scientists or other "experts" can be in a position to know. Even scientists rely on fellow scientists, which implies that experts rely on the same type of testimony as everybody else. Testimony is thus important for knowledge, keeping in mind that testimony requires essential duties of donors to keep promises and essential duties of seekers to use their judgements about sources well.

Beyond Testimony

Aside from the ability to determine in what a reliable source consists, we must also go beyond the source to test the claims the source makes. There are many limitations to testimony. According to Faulkner, the disposition and context of the speaker can determine the trust we place in her:

> Central to the contextual judgement of testimony is the contextual judgement of a speaker's credibility. Thus, and paradigmatically, we may be swayed by our perception of a speaker as sincere. A firm handshake and warm smile may be our reason for accepting what a stranger says. The testimonial encounter may thereby instil the belief that *this speaker*, identified demonstratively, is credible. Further, psychological evidence suggests that such contextual judgement of character will generally preside over the contextual judgement of the testimonial situation as a whole. Since action renders the actor silent, we tend to explain actions - such as an act of telling- through the attribution of dispositions to the actor. (Paul Faulkner, 32.)

Hence, seekers can be swayed by the context in which we find our sources. Faulkner gives us the example of a firm handshake and warm smile that could possibly cloud our judgement. We may be unaware of contextual elements that determine our judgements of credibility. Thus, it is my contention that seekers, to be truly responsible for the claims they make or the beliefs they hold, must be in a position to test the claims they believe. And, therefore,

> Our belief in any proposition should be proportioned to the evidence upon which it rests. By this, it must of course be understood that each individual should proportion his belief to the evidence which is accessible to himself. (Stephen, 103)

If we can go beyond the reliance on testimony to the investigation of a belief or claim then we ought to. If we ought to go beyond testimony to the investigation of a claim, is the trust we place in sources of knowledge in testimony unwarranted? The importance of sources is the first step in investigation. I have shown that a source places us on the way to knowledge.

Clifford suggests that testimony alone is not adequate for a seeker. He gives us a specific example in which the people of a specific country accuse the teachers of that country of being bad teachers. A social group is formed and this group accuse the teachers publicly and ruin their lives. A commission is formed to actually look at the accusations this group made about the teachers. The commission finds that not only were the teachers innocent of the crimes but the evidence to prove that innocence was easily obtained. Clifford states:

> After these disclosures the inhabitants of that country looked upon the members of the agitating society, not only as persons whose judgement was to be distrusted but also as not longer to be counted honorable men. For although they had sincerely and "conscientiously" believed in the charges they made, yet they had no right to believe on such evidence as was before them. Their sincere convictions, instead of being honestly earned by patient inquiring, were stolen by listening to the voice of prejudice and passion. (Clifford, 20)

This example shows us that donors of knowledge are trusted to investigate the claims they make. Yet, I think this example can show us that seekers too share that responsibility of investigation. How could the lives of these teachers be ruined if people did not believe the social group who made those accusations? I think this example tells us that, not only should we trust donors to know that the claims they make are relied upon

and that they are trusted because they should be in a position to know, we should also be

prepared to investigate the claims we are led to believe.

Investigation is the next logical step in being responsible. We are responsible for

our judgements about our sources but we are also responsible for testing those claims

when we can. We shall see that Clifford's notion states that what is important is holding

claims and accepting them when claims have the *possibility* of being tested.

Clifford's main claim is that one must believe on the evidence granted through

our investigations:

> Every man who has accepted the statement from somebody else, without
> himself testing and verifying it, is out of court; his word is worth nothing
> at all. And when we get back at last to the true birth and beginning of the
> statement, two serious questions must be disposed of in regard to him who
> first made it: was he mistaken in thinking that he *knew* about this matter,
> or was he lying? (Clifford, 31)

The primary duty we have is to investigate. We trust the method of investigation itself to

yield results that establish a belief. In light of those results or that evidence we must

abandon or revise our beliefs. Clifford states:

> If the belief has been accepted on insufficient evidence, the pleasure is a
> stolen one. Not only does it deceive ourselves by giving us a sense of
> power which we do not really possess, but it is sinful, because it is stolen
> on defiance of our duty to mankind. That duty is to guard ourselves from
> such beliefs as from a pestilence, which may shortly master our own body
> and then spread to the rest of the town. (Clifford, 23)

Our duty to mankind is to believe in regard to the available evidence and avoid testimony alone. For Clifford, verification is the ideal of investigation.[13] That is, according to Clifford, one ought only to believe another if the claims they make can be verified. He states, "The goodness and greatness of a man do not justify us in accepting a belief upon the warrant of his authority, unless there are reasonable grounds for supposing that he knew the truth of what he was saying. And there can be no grounds for supposing that a man knows that which we, without ceasing to be men, could not be supposed to verify." (Clifford, 29)

Clifford suggests that an honest source of knowledge makes claims that can be verified. We should note further that we are upset if those claims cannot be verified. Thus, according to Clifford, we ought to trust those sources of knowledge that make, and know they make, verifiable claims. A source of knowledge, to be considered a source must also know this about being a source of knowledge and this is why I claim that donors ought to ensure that we test the claims that those donors make.

However, there is still an element of testimony that suggests we never need to test the claims donors make. What's needed for Clifford is the *possibility* of verification. Clifford states:

> I may never actually verify it, or even see any experiment which goes towards verifying it; but still I have quite reason enough to justify me in believing that the verification is within the reach of human appliances and

[13]Of course there are alternatives to verification that stress the importance of trust in testimony such as Sosa's reliability or Code's epistemic responsibility. However, as we shall see, the logic of my argument works better if I use Clifford's specific notion of verification.

powers, and in particular that it has been actually performed by my informant. His result, the belief to which he has been led by his inquiries, is valid not only for himself but for others; it is watched and tested by those who are working in the same ground, and who know that no greater service can be rendered to science than the purification of accepted results from the errors which may have crept into them. It is in this way that the result becomes common property, a right object of belief, which is a social affair and matter of public business. Thus it is to be observed that his authority is valid because there are those who question it and verify it. (Clifford, 29-30)

Hence, although claims may go untested by the seeker of knowledge, the ability to be tested is what is at stake. Therefore, an honest source of knowledge makes claims that have the ability to be verified. We trust that others in the field know the claims of my source of knowledge and they know that my source has tested the claim. Thus, there seems to be a form of social activity in the notion of testing intellectual integrity.

This form of verification is called 'weak verification' and is contrasted with another form aptly designated 'strong verification.' Both forms can be found in A.J. Ayer's book entitled Language, Truth, and Logic. In it Ayer argues that weak verification allows propositions to be meaningful when the possibility of their verification is present. Strong verification states that propositions are only meaningful when they are verified. The distinction is necessary to point out because strong verification is self defeating. That is, strong verification cannot itself be verified and thus fails the criterion of meaning it itself suggests is necessary. However, weak verification allows the possibility of its own verification and thus avoids the self defeating aspect of strong verification.

Weak verification is necessary for this notion of trustworthiness in Clifford for it allows us to suggest that we can indeed trust sources of knowledge independent of our specific investigation because the claim has become common property. Clifford states:

> Our words, our phrases, our forms and process and modes of thought, are common property, fashioned and perfected from age to age; an heirloom, which every succeeding generation inherits as a precious deposit and a sacred trust, to be handed to the next one, not unchanged, but enlarged and purified, with some clear marks of its proper handiwork. Into this, for good or ill, is woven every belief of every man who has speech of his fellows. An awful privilege and an awful responsibility, that we should help to create the world in which posterity will live. (Clifford, 21)

Claims become open with the notion of weak verification in the court of knowledge by having the characteristic of possibly being verified.

Trusting Established Methods

To be trustworthy, a responsible agent requires us to trust the methods of investigation themselves. If we can go beyond reliance on testimony to experimentation, we must be able to see that investigation itself infers that we trust the methods of investigation. This is what Clifford is referring to when he describes knowledge as a product of our heritage because if we assume that knowledge is a product within our community, the methods of investigation necessary for knowledge must also therefore grow with the community.

It is unwise to assume that investigation is done alone. According to Trudy Govier, the notion of active research presupposes a reliance on other better informed

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individuals. This in turn presupposes trusting the integrity of those individuals and thus creating a network of individuals engaged in investigation. She states:

> On most topics, similarly, most people are non-experts who depend on experts for many of their beliefs. We can check some claims and reports made by other people, but only by relying on the claims and reports of still other people. In fact, dependence on the testimony of others is unavoidable even for specialists. Expertise is based on training and theoretical study, and both are based on the experience and knowledge accumulated by others. Active research in the quest for new conclusions is based on the results and theories of other people. Questions and hypotheses emerge from work done by other scholars, thus presuming in a general way scholarly or scientific integrity and competence. (Govier, 54)

In turn, we trust that if we follow an established test or experiment, the results of that experiment will themselves become established.

Govier continues to suggest, as I do, that a necessary attribute of a responsible seeker is trust placed in herself. She states:

> From this comes the notion that we must trust our judgement of the trusted methodology. A quite different argument for general trust in the word of others is based on our attitudes to ourselves as generally reliable observers and interpreters of the world. As individuals we generally presume that we can sense and feel and tell what we have experienced, that we can recall and interpret what we have undergone and communicate it in a moderately accurate way to others. We have to do this to function at all. Some self trust is needed for stable thought. Trusting ourselves, we regard our experiences, beliefs, and judgements as having some intrinsic merit. We regard ourselves as credible and reliable observers and actors in the world. (Govier, 65)

Even though I suggest that experiments themselves can grow communally, we must be sincere enough to revise or abandon our beliefs based in the results of tests. We must trust our results independent of how we feel toward those results. Our judgement and trustworthiness is necessary for after investigation, we have the possibility of becoming

knowledge donors. That is, with results come the transmission of results and the trust of seekers place on us to transmit those results in a responsible manner. For anyone to be deemed intellectually responsible they must test their beliefs and not turn their backs on the results of their tests. Once we know a thing we may be in a position in which we are relied upon to honestly transmit that knowledge.

Any knowledge seeker relies on sources; however, any knowledge donor also relies on sources. Having a community of knowledge seekers and donors established or having a network of people who share the same intellectual project allows donors and seekers to rely on each other. *"Any* plan that involves two or more people working together, from cooking Christmas dinner to assembling a bookcase to building an oil rig, demands mutual trust in each other's capacity and inclination to do the job." (O'Hara, 13)

Therefore, there is an aspect of community or shared projects that must be addressed because mutual trust is necessary for any particular project involving more than one person.

The Regulatory Function of the Community

There are duties we have towards others and there are duties we have towards ourselves. These latter duties, such as promise keeping, can be seen as virtues. The virtue of trust I would suggest only makes sense in relation to a social context. In Francis Fukuyama's text, Trust: The Social Virtues and the Creation of Prosperity, we see that

this notion of social virtue is necessary for the discovery and promotion of our individual

virtues. Fukuyama declares:

> Among the cultural habits that constitute virtues, not all contribute to the
> formation of social capital. Some can be exercised by individuals acting
> alone, while others - in particular, reciprocal trust - emerge only in a social
> context. The social virtues, including honesty, reliability, cooperativeness,
> and a sense of duty to others, are critical for incubating the individual
> ones. (Fukuyama, 43)

Fukuyama's famous example is called "lean manufacturing." This is an example of

mutual trust at work in a Toyota factor:

> The essence of lean manufacturing is the creation of an extremely taut and
> fragile manufacturing system that can be easily disrupted by problems
> anywhere along the line from supply to final assembly. Inventories are
> kept at a minimal level, and each worker has a cord at his workstation by
> which he can bring the entire production line to a halt if he sees a problem.
> If a worker pulls his cord or if a supplier fails to provide the product on the
> exact schedule expected, the entire assembly like operation grinds to a
> halt. The very fragility of the lean manufacturing process acts as an
> information feedback loop that tells the workers of production engineers
> when there is a problem. (Fukuyama, 260)

The example of lean manufacturing shows the high trust of workers in the plant required

for the smooth flow of the assembly line. This system works well only if cooperation and

high trust are set in place between workers. I would suggest this is a great example of the

trust we find in a community of knowers in which the flow of knowledge depends on

cooperation and high trust between seekers and donors.

Throughout the discussion of the relationship between knowledge donors and

knowledge seekers. I have consistently assumed in the background of this examination a

community of knowers that are engaged in open discussion. Code will argue that what is

necessary is that the claims of knowledge donors and seekers are open to public criticism:

"It is one mark of a free society that this mutual criticism can exist." (Code, 236)

Therefore, what is necessary for responsible belief is to understand there is a relationship

of trust between knowledge seekers and knowledge donors. This relationship occurs in a

community of knowledge seekers and knowledge donors in which

> Knowledge claims are rarely made by persons who stand alone, separated
> from their past and the past of their community, face to face with an
> experience that must be assimilated "cold." Efforts to know are part of
> human lives, lived in communities with histories. Claims to know must
> not only be true to the experience currently demanding explanation but
> must also find a place in a complex network of established products of
> cognitive endeavors. Coherence, too, is a persistent ideal. (Code, 139)

Code is claiming, as I am, that we must trust the community of knowers to make claims

public because what we claim must fit into the existing body of established knowledge.

Our claims to know are based on established knowledge and could not have arisen

without the community of established knowledge.

Code's conclusion is that trust is necessary for membership in a knowing

community:

> To sustain this trust is a primary cognitive imperative: it is a condition of
> viable membership in an epistemic community. In fact, the very
> possibility of epistemic life is dependent upon intricate networks of shared
> trust. This basic trust is a tenuous and fragile construct, tacit and implicit
> though it may be. It is always open to violation by the very things that
> create and sustain it: belief in other people, confidence that much of what
> they tell us can be taken at face value, reliance upon our ability to assess
> their credibility. People are fallible, credulous, and deceitful. (Code, 173)

Thus, although trust is necessary, it forces our duty to be careful and be responsible. I would further claim that Code advises we investigate our beliefs when we can. Code's notion of testimony based in a community of knowers, who are interdependent upon each other, may be the first fundamental step in that investigation.

The trust we place in donors of knowledge independent from the tests we make only occurs because the claims they make are filtered by the community of knowers. The publicity of the claim is what is at stake and we trust donors of knowledge because we trust this public forum. Thus, we trust sources of knowledge because they have proven themselves trustworthy in this public forum. Furthermore, the community functions as a perfection or purification device that molds knowledge from age to age. Hence, not only do we trust the openness of common property to ensure credibility and integrity, but we also trust it to ensure the success of knowledge in future generations.

Clifford advises we trust only those sources of knowledge who know they are relied upon. I have also shown that for Clifford we must trust that our sources of knowledge are in a position to know the claims they make and we must trust that donors advocate investigation. We must also trust the method of investigation itself. This in turn presupposes we trust our sources to make claims that have the possibility of verification. Furthermore, the possibility of verification presupposes that we trust a community of knowers to make claims public for the refinement of knowledge and for the integrity of our sources. For Clifford verification is done by the idea of common property.

In the notion of trust, we can further see that a community presents itself as an arena of testability in which an idea or belief can be checked. This notion of checking with the community has many names. A simple example in academia is peer review. O'Hara gives us a nice explanation of peer review when he states:

> One way of steering between the horns of this dilemma (being in a position to confirm yourself and being in a position where we have to trust experts) is the method of *peer review*. In this traditional method, which began, and is still most prevalent in the field of science, a scientist is judged by his peers, i.e. similarly qualified persons who, unlike a randomly chosen member of the general public, are able to understand the issues involved in her performance, and therefore properly assess its quality. (O'Hara, 162)

The condition of common property is its publicity and repeatability in a public forum. Therefore, evidence is made available to any who choose to investigate and not just those in a particular field. We may find that we trust those who know more than we do in any particular field and we see that other people in that particular field review each other's work. However, that never means the evidence is available only to them.

We trust exemplars in any specific field, within this community of knowers, to already and consistently show or have shown veracity as knowledge donors. What makes an exemplar in any specific field is one's ability to investigate well, which presupposes the integrity of one's investigations because of one's trustworthiness as knowledge seekers. We are upset, as we use the public arena, when a trusted exemplar in such a community fabricates information or is in some other way insincere. We note, however, that trustworthy exemplars allow the possibility for their beliefs to be proven likewise,

and we are suspicious of those who claim to be knowledge exemplars who do not allow their work to be made public for public scrutiny.

The community is thus seen as a type of monitor or regulator in which knowledge of the world and the tests available to arrive at that knowledge are open. Fundamentally, we trust this kind of community to be open and available independent of who we are. We could call this community a type of group mind, in which everyone is treated as you wish to be treated.

> Moralistic trust is a commandment to treat people *as if* they were trustworthy. Moralistic trust is the belief that others share your fundamental moral values and therefore should be treated as you would wish to be treated by them. What matters is a sense of connection with others because you see them as members of a community whose interests must be taken seriously. (Uslander, 18.)

Belief becomes knowledge only through the regulatory function of the community, and belief holders necessarily trust the community to aid in the possible verification or falsification of that belief. As Hume states:

> When each individual perceives the same sense of interest in all his fellows, he immediately performs his part of any contract, as being assur'd that they will not be wanting in theirs. All of them, by concert, enter in a scheme of actions, calculated for common benefit, and agree to be true to their word; nor is there any thing requisite to form this concert or convention, but that every one have a sense of interest in the faithful fulfilling of engagements, and express that sense to other members of the society. This immediately causes that interest to operate upon them; and interest is the *first* obligation to the performance of promises. (Hume, 574-5)

Conclusion

We have seen that in order for testimony to be considered valid, there must be a central moral implication in the relationship between sources and those who rely on them. It is my contention that the moral virtue of trust adequately describes the implication of testimony. It has been show that sources ought to be trustworthy because it is to their advantage to be so. Furthermore, sources ought to be trustworthy for trustworthiness fosters knowledge. Sources ought to be sincere in their dealings with seekers and therefore ought to make claims that can be verified, which places seekers on the path to verify the claims of their source.

Seekers too have an obligation to trust. For a seeker, the risk involved is great for a complete reliance on donors puts a seeker in a relationship of dependence. Thus, it my contention that a seeker ought to, when she can, investigate the beliefs that are important to her. Furthermore, she can only investigate based in established tests. Thus, a seeker implicitly must rely on and trust the established testing methods. Hence, it is my claim that a seeker ought to be trustworthy enough to revise or abandon her beliefs in light of the evidence.

It is also my argument that the relationship between donors and seekers can only be fruitful in engagement with a community. The publicity of the community allows claims to be open and criticized. Thus, the function of the community is regulatory. That is, the community filters claims and can show us whom we ought to or ought not to trust.

Criticisms and Concluding Remarks

Within knowledge acquisition and belief formation there is a central moral core in all of our responsibilities, including intellectual responsibilities. Lorraine Code, however, thinks that moral responsibilities are important but that they are merely analogous to our intellectual responsibilities. She states, "we structure our epistemological reasoning on an analogy with our moral reasoning." (Code, 48) She gives us many examples of how they are similar (both require testimony, both require honesty, both require others, etc.) but never any particular way as to how they are dissimilar. Thus, she makes what is known as a distinction without a difference. A distinction without a difference occurs when one makes a claim that two things are distinct or separate but the error in reasoning occurs when one never shows the reader how those two things are different or separate. She states, "reasoning is analogous to but not identical with, moral reasoning." (Code, 49) Hence we can see that she is definitely drawing a distinction. Furthermore, she later claims:

> Different cognitive capacities and epistemic circumstances create situations where experience is structured, and hence the world is known, quite differently from one cognitive agent to another. Each time a moral judgement is made, then, two parts of a situation must be assessed: the way it is apprehended and the action that is performed as a result. The former, the apprehension, is a matter for epistemological assessment and the moral dimension of the situation is crucially dependent upon this epistemic component. (Code, 69)

Therefore, not only are the two realms separate, the moral realm is dependent on epistemological assessment. The problem is that she calls this separation, confusingly enough, 'moral judgement' and the idea she wants to investigate is that prior to moral action there is epistemological assessment that we are to be held responsible for. However, she never tells us what the distinction is between the notion of moral reasoning and epistemological reasoning. Indeed, she uses morally laden terms like virtue and trust. These terms, for Code, can be applied to epistemological reasoning as well as to moral reasoning. However, again, with every morally laden term she uses she stresses that the term, like virtue, is analogous to epistemological reasoning. With virtue she states that "intellectual virtue increases moral goodness," assuming the whole time her original distinction. The same is true with trust, of which she states: "this question (whom can we believe) is about responsibility and trust and is analogous to questions about responsibility and trust in moral contexts." (Code, 175) The problem is that her discussions of virtue and trust are discussions about virtue and trust in a moral context. That is to say, I see no difference between her notions of epistemic responsibilities and Clifford's moral notions of accountability.

My main criticism of W. K. Clifford flow from his insistence upon testing all that we believe. I propose that implicitly Clifford can only be claiming that we test those beliefs that are important to us. I would suggest that, by his use of examples, the beliefs that are important to us include but are not limited to those beliefs that concern others, beliefs that we are passionate about, and those beliefs that directly involve our trusting

others. I would also note that Clifford is suggesting that beliefs like the floor will hold are only considered when we have reason to suspect that the floor will not hold. We do not have to test this belief every time we walk across our floors. Thus, it seems Clifford must mean that we should test our belief when we are in doubt and we should test our beliefs when our conscience dictates.

The next problem I have directly concerns trust. His notion of trust states that we should never trust a person based on her character alone. He then says that one ought to trust a person if the source of knowledge has made her claims verifiable in common property. He then claims that this is what makes a person honorable. Thus, he states that one ought to trust a person based not on her supposed character but on her actual character. The problem arises in our knowledge of the source of knowledge. To call a person a source of knowledge presupposes we trust that she makes claims verifiable, which is the reason why she are honorable. Thus, it does not seem coherent to suggest that we ought not to trust a source of knowledge based on her character when it is her character, or her trustworthiness, which makes her a source of knowledge. My solution to this problem is that to call a person a source of knowledge does presuppose we trust her, placing ourselves in a position of dependence where the risk of failure is great. However, we trust her because of her past achievements and feel assured that we are in a good position to know, thus, never guaranteeing that what we know is certain. Her past achievements are what makes her trustworthy to us and are implicit in her character.

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The issue of trust leads to further questions to explore about social and collective responsibility. If I rely on others and a community, can belief formation really be my responsibility alone? Surely, if the community regulates belief formation and knowledge acquisition, then it must be held accountable for the knowledge and belief it regulates. So an examination of intellectual collective responsibility necessarily follows to show how individuals are responsible. Yet, such an examination must also show that the regulation of the community presupposes a type of ethics of belief or responsibility.

One avenue to further explore centers around René Descartes.[14] Descartes' famous investigation into certainty can be seen in two ways in relation to the ethics of belief debate. The outline of the ethics of belief that I have stated here reveals knowledge to be a very public affair. Descartes' examination centers around a knowing subject. Thus, one way that Descartes can be read is to have the completely opposite type of project. However, the other way that Descartes could be read in relation to the ethics of belief debate is that Descartes' introspection was patient and honorable in that he bracketed his influences and used reason alone to arrive at his conclusions. Thus, an examination of Descartes could be a very interesting topic to address for it seems that he formed his beliefs honorably without acknowledging the role of the community.

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[14]This approach arises from the Atlantic Regional Philosophical Association conference. I presented a paper entitled "The Role of Trust in the Ethics of Belief." I am grateful to Suma Rajiva for her questions on the project of Descartes.

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