

Hybrid virtues

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ABSTRACT

The controversies about cases such as of epistemic injustice, epistemic paternalism and epistocracy indicate that knowledge needs to be considered as socially situated phenomena and, consequently, that epistemic attitudes, social practices and institutions require evaluation from both an epistemic and an ethical/political perspective. The project titled as ethics of knowing and, especially, promising concept of hybrid virtues or corresponding hybrid view provides a desirable framework for the comprehensive evaluation of beliefs, social institutions and practices that embrace intellectual as well as ethical and political values. In the paper, I will start with exploring testimonial justice as a form of epistemic justice or, more precisely, by questioning of both epistemic and ethical justificatory status of credibility deficit and credibility excess in everyday epistemic practices. I will argue that not only an epistemic attitude such as credibility excess, but also social practices such as epistemic paternalism or epistocracy demonstrate the conflict of epistemic and ethical/political values and impose on us various doubts concerning the content of a hybrid view. Consequently, I will address the questions of the minimal conditions of epistemic attitude, practice or institution that deserve an ascription of virtuous in a hybrid sense.

KEYWORDS

Hybrid virtues, epistemic, political and ethical values, epistemic injustice, epistemic paternalism, epistocracy

1. Introduction

The consideration and evaluation of epistemic properties of individual beliefs, social practices and institutions in isolation from their ethical and political values, albeit theoretically and methodologically significant, are usually considered too abstract and irrelevant for the evaluation of the social desirability of institutions and practices. Moreover, standard analytical epistemology, insisting on normative epistemic purism, focusing on the individual cognizer and neglecting the social situatedness of knowledge, consciously limits the scope of epistemological analysis to the conceptual analysis of crucial epistemological notions such as knowledge, truth, justification or like. The consequence is, on one side, the marginalization of epistemological values in the analysis and justification of legitimacy of social

practices and institutions and on the other the unacceptable ‘deconstruction’ of epistemology and popular epistemic nihilism.¹ New tendencies in social epistemology² and, especially, Fricker’s promising concept of hybrid virtues or corresponding hybrid view on virtues provide opportunity for the complex evaluation of individual beliefs, social institutions and practices that embrace epistemic as well as ethical and political values. For instance, her notion of epistemic justice is an example of hybrid virtue that unifies epistemic and ethical or even political values. In the paper, I will start with exploring testimonial justice as a form of epistemic justice or, more precisely, by questioning of both epistemic and ethical justificatory status of credibility deficit and credibility excess. I would like to emphasize that, beside clear cases such as credibility deficit, which is at the same time epistemically and ethically unjustified, credibility excess is far more difficult case in a sense that it is not equally epistemically and ethically culpable. Consequently, in the second part I will address the questions of the conditions of epistemic attitude that deserve an ascription of virtuous in a hybrid sense. Not only an epistemic attitude such as credibility excess but also social practices such as epistemic paternalism or epistocracy demonstrate the conflict of epistemic and ethical/political values and impose on us various doubts concerning the content of a hybrid view. The third part will concern the difficulties in evaluation of these two social practices with the aim to extract, in the fourth part, a minimal condition for justification of individual beliefs, social practices or institutions from the perspective of a hybrid view.

2. *Testimonial injustice*

The notion of epistemic justices as hybrid virtue was introduced by Miranda Fricker³. Under this notion, she differentiates between testimonial and hermeneutical justice. I would like to focus here exclusively on the testimonial injustice illustrated in the specific cases in which hearer’s credibility deficit toward speaker causes serious epistemic and ethical harm for the speaker. Let me explain the problem in a more detailed way. A testimonial situation is characterised by conveying information from the speaker/informant to the hearer/audience. The hearer makes a credibility judgment ascribing to the speaker a certain degree of reliability, credibility or trustworthiness. Finally, she makes an epistemic decision to trust, distrust or suspend her trust. Epistemic success in testimonial situation depends on the fulfilment of two conditions: speaker condition and hearer

¹ See for instance in R. Rorty 1979., M. Foucault 1980.,1991., B. Latour and S. Woolgar 1986., B. Barnes and D. Bloor 1982.

² A. I. Goldman, 1987., 1999., 2004, 2010., M. Fricker, 2006., 2007., L. Code, 2010.

³ M. Fricker 2006., 2007., 2013.

condition.⁴ The speaker condition is defined through her reliability, that is, her epistemic and moral character. Only a competent and sincere informant is epistemically responsible. The hearer condition is defined as epistemic responsibility in assessment of the speaker: the ascribed reliability needs to correspond to the real reliability of the speaker. It is worth to notice that in any testimonial situation a hearer assesses (in accordance to her background evidence) not only the acceptability of the testimonial content but also the speaker's general trustworthiness as an informant.⁵

Fricker stresses that the hearer's assessment has the form of basic testimonial perception and in the later phase a more sophisticated testimonial reflection about speaker trustworthiness. According to her opinion, even in the basic testimonial perception a hearer perceives the speaker as a member of a social group (defined by education, gender, age, class, regional background, etc.) and makes a credibility judgment in accordance to this. Fricker's crucial point is that, consequently, credibility judgement is necessarily infected by our stereotypes and prejudices. Stereotypes are social generalizations about epistemic trustworthiness (wildly held associations between a given social group and one or more attributes) usually neutral to the criteria of reliability or accuracy. Moreover, there are prejudicial stereotypes that also may affect the credibility a hearer ascribes to the speaker in a way that that they tend to inflate or deflate the credibility demonstrated by the speaker. Accordingly, Fricker writes that there are two types of prejudicial dysfunction in testimonial practice: (i) credibility excess or the situation in which the speaker receives *more* credibility than she deserves and (ii) credibility deficit or the situation in which the speaker receives *less* credibility than she deserves. For instance, the cases of credibility excess are situations in which a patient ascribes to her general physician, due their professional identity, a specialized medical competence that she doesn't possess or a situation in which a professor ascribes to his self-confident male colleague more reliability than he really possesses due to his gender identity, or a testimonial situation in which a salesman ascribes more reliability to a member of privileged social group due to his class identity. The cases of a credibility deficit are, for instance, a situation in which a man ascribes to his female friend less reliability than she deserves due to her gender identity or a situation in which a jury thinks that a black man doesn't deserve any credibility due to his racial identity.⁶ Also, Fricker in a later article offers as an example a "stop and search" case where racial prejudice affects the perception of the police

⁴ J. Lackey 2006., 2008., C.A.J. Coady 2006.

⁵ J. Hardwig 1991, S. Purić – Samaržija, 2007a, 2007b, 2011.

⁶ Fricker relies here on the examples from literature such as *Talented Mr Ripley* by Patricia Highsmith or *To Kill a Mockinbird* by Harper Lee.

officer so that a young black male driver receives a prejudicially deflated level of credibility when he declares that he is the owner of the car.⁷

According to Fricker, while credibility deficit produces epistemic/testimonial injustice, the cases of credibility excess do not. A case of credibility deficit results in the *exclusion of the subject from a trustful conversation: not only it undermines his capacity for knowledge that is essential to his value as a human being, but by doing so it discriminates him as a social being.*⁸ The hearer deflates the speaker's credibility, and also does something ethically/politically bad by undermining the speaker's credibility as a person of knowledge. That means that a hearer assessment is culpable from both the epistemic and the ethical perspective: she is both epistemically irresponsible as a hearer and she did an ethically wrong thing. Testimonial injustice, enacted in the case of a credibility deficit, is at the same time intellectually and ethically inappropriate. The virtue of epistemic justice here, is, therefore, genuinely hybrid in that it aims at both truth and justice. According to Fricker, epistemic/testimonial justice, considered either as an intellectual virtue or as an ethical virtue, contains the very same motivation: to neutralize prejudice in one's credibility judgment. While the intellectual virtues generally have *truth* as their ultimate end, and the moral virtues have some form of *good* as their ultimate end, hybrid virtues have both truth and good as their ultimate ends. The hybridity of epistemic/testimonial justice depends only on the demonstrated *harmony of epistemic and ethical ends in the specific case of neutralizing prejudice.*⁹

As I mentioned previously, Fricker does not think it would be right to characterize credibility excess as an example of epistemic/testimonial injustice, since the consequences of such misjudgements aren't severe enough. Some people in a consistently privileged position of social power might be subject to a variant strain of testimonial misjudgement, but none the less it does not show that any token cases of credibility excess constitute an ethical wrongness.¹⁰ A proper case of epistemic/testimonial injustice might be termed as a *systematic* testimonial injustice produced not by prejudice *simpliciter*, but specifically by those prejudice that 'track' the subject through different injustices (economic, educational, professional, sexual, legal, political or like). Epistemic/testimonial injustice appears in different degrees of severity: sometimes a speaker's word is taken far less seriously than it would be absent the prejudice, yet they are still believed, but sometimes a small credibility deflation is enough to entail that the speaker's word

⁷ M. Fricker, 2013.

⁸ M. Fricker, 2007.

⁹ M. Fricker, 2007.

¹⁰ Also, according to Fricker, not all sorts of credibility deficit are cases of epistemic/testimonial injustice: credibility deficit might simply result from *epistemic error* (human judgment is fallible and unlucky epistemic mistakes are always possible) or it can be produced by *incidental* cases of testimonial injustice.

is rejected. Anyway, epistemically unjust can be only a case in which epistemic culpability based on the mistaken ascription of the reliability based on the prejudice is connected with serious ethical consequences. Credibility excess, according to Fricker, in spite of epistemic culpability based on the prejudice (of positive valence) does not produce enough serious ethical damages for a speaker.

2. *What a case of credibility excess teaches us about hybrid virtues?*

There is no doubt that credibility excess causes epistemic wrongness on the side of hearer because her epistemic obligation is to match the level of credibility she attributes to her interlocutor with the real credibility of speaker. Excess, as well as deficit, violate the rule of a testimonial situation (hearer condition) and produces an epistemically unjustified belief (or declares the epistemic irresponsibility of hearer). Even Fricker recognizes that credibility excess causes further epistemic wrongness for the speaker: it can mal-form the speaker's epistemic character and in this sense can also be considered a wrong. Namely, the excess of credibility can be advantageous for a person of ruling elite, privileged education or distinctive accent. However, at the same time *systematic* exercise of credibility excess can cause him to develop epistemic arrogance that puts a range of epistemic virtues out of his reach, rendering him closed-minded, dogmatic and blithely impervious to criticism.

At the beginning, we can notice that credibility excess causes systematic *indirect* ethical wrongness to some members of society. Privileging one group over other due prejudicial stereotype of positive valence, automatically discriminate the 'opposite' groups depriving them from the appropriate level of credibility. For instance, credibility excess to male professor implies credibility deficit to female professors, credibility excess to socially privileged elite implies credibility deficit to the members of lower classes or like. The prejudices of positive valence that cause credibility excess are a symptom of the existence of prejudices of negative valence that cause credibility deficit. So, credibility excess privileging one group 'hits' indirectly the de-privileged subjects of through different but systematic injustices (economic, educational, professional, sexual, legal, political or like). 'Positive' discrimination (based on prejudices of positive valence) is still discrimination that unjustly targets some groups due their group identity. We would like to stress here that while Fricker correctly admits the fact that credibility excess is as epistemically culpable as credibility deficit is, it seems that ethical culpability is not as unserious as she thought.

Secondly, it seems that we can summarize Fricker's conditions for epistemic/testimonial injustice in the following way: (i) the existence of identity prejudicial stereotypes; (ii) the failed epistemic obligation on the side of the hearer,

(iii) the epistemic wrong done to the speaker and (iv) direct and serious ethical wrong done to on the speaker. As we can see above, in spite of epistemic culpability being comparable with credibility excess, for Fricker, credibility excess is not ethically unjust because it does not cause *direct* and serious wrong to the speaker. The problem is here that, for Fricker, credibility excess as a practice that does not strive toward truth is still unproblematic from the perspective of hybrid virtue grounded at the harmony of epistemic and ethical ends. From an ethical perspective, credibility excess can be classified as (directly) in-culpable behaviour, but it is hardly acceptable that credibility excess is not classified as culpable behaviour from the perspective of hybrid virtue. Fricker obviously privileges ethical values over epistemical and consequently fails to develop a genuine hybrid view on virtues that balances or harmonizes appropriately epistemic and ethical values.

Finally, Fricker has all merits for recognizing and defining a case of credibility deficit as a clear case of epistemic injustice: both the value of truth and the value of good are jeopardized due to identity prejudices. However, credibility deficit is an unquestionable case from the perspective of hybrid view because both constituencies have same negative valence: epistemic and ethical wrongs are done. The crucial question is how to evaluate, from the perspective of hybrid view, the difficult cases in which epistemic and ethical constituencies do not have the same valence such as in a case of credibility excess in which an epistemic wrong goes with ethical (direct) innocence. Moreover, there are interesting opposite cases in which an ethical culpability goes without an epistemic one such as, for instance, epistemic paternalism and epistocracy. A hybrid view that aims to harmonize the assessment of epistemic and ethical values needs to define a proper framework for the evaluation of these attitudes, social practices and institutions.

3. *Epistemic paternalism and epistocracy*

The controversies about epistemic paternalism and epistocracy indicate that knowledge needs to be considered as socially situated phenomena and, consequently, that there are social practices and institutions that require evaluation from both an epistemic and an ethical/political perspective. Epistemic paternalism is an ethically doubtful practice of communication control that can produce epistemically good consequence in terms of truth.¹¹ Epistocracy is ethically and politically dubious practice of public decision making because it privileges some people over other with the aim to generate outcomes of better

¹¹ The practice of epistemic paternalism defends A.I. Goldman, 1991.

epistemic quality.¹² In spite of epistemic merits, both practices are usually criticized because of ethical deficits. Hybrid view is an optimal platform to rethink these practices and eventually offer an approach that will not result in a paralyzing conclusion that they are acceptable from an epistemic perspective and unacceptable from an ethical one. Let me say just a few more detailed words about these practices.

3.1. Epistemic paternalism

Epistemic paternalism is a social practice of communication control or a regulation of information that aims towards optimal truth-production. Alvin I. Goldman, who defended some form of regulation vs. deregulation of information, imposes two general pre-conditions to the practice of epistemic paternalism: (i) epistemic paternalism may be practised only in suboptimal epistemic circumstances and (ii) only (objective) experts can be the controllers of information.¹³ Suboptimal epistemic circumstances are such in which a majority of people is inadequately informed, not interested in numerous topics, insufficiently educated to absorb numerous topics, not motivated to invest time and cognitive resources in various topics or the circumstances in which they don't have enough time for the truth-searching. In suboptimal epistemic circumstances a control of delivered information instead of free circulation of ideas will produce more true beliefs, Goldman claims. Besides rather common - sense assumption that ordinary epistemic situations are suboptimal in the mentioned sense, there are also numerous scientific findings that prove that a majority of people is not able for various reasons to make an epistemically reliable decision.¹⁴ Moreover, not only that the majority of people is not capacitated to make an epistemically good decision, but in the deregulated epistemic circumstances, the informed minority between them cannot properly influence the opinions of the uninformed majority. Namely, informed people in great many circumstances refrain of disclosing what they (consider themselves to) know, either in the light of the informational

¹² For instance, the most prominent proposals of various forms of epistocracy are Plato's *kallipolis*, Mill's famous idea of plural voting and even Schumpeter's elitist democracy. (See in Plato 2000., J.S. Mill 2014., J.A. Schumpeter, 1942.)

¹³ A.I. Goldman, 1991., 1999.

¹⁴ K. Ahlstrom-Vij convincingly claims that widespread incompetence is well documented fact. For instance, only 13% of the more than 2000 political questions examined could be answered correctly by 75% or more of those asked, and only 41% could be answered by more than half the public. Many of the facts known by relatively small percentage of the public seem critical to understanding the political world: fundamental rules of the game, classic civil liberties, key concepts of political economy, the names of key representatives, policy positions of presidential candidates or the political parties, basic social indicators and significant public policies. See in K. Ahlstrom-Vij 2012., M.X.D. Carpini and S. Keeter, 1996.

pressure coming out of whatever happens to be the majority position or the social pressure associated with the risk of social sanctions against dissenters.¹⁵ Further, if they do disclose their information, the impact of their information on the deliberating group would not be particularly great due to the so called *common knowledge/information effect*: “The influence of a particular item of information is directly and positively related to the number of group members who have knowledge of that item before the group discussion and judgment.”¹⁶ So, we may briefly register that Goldman correctly diagnosed the epistemic features of ordinary situations: only a minority of deliberators can be expected to be motivated and informed on the relevant matters and their influence on the viewpoint of the majority of less motivated and less informed is not decisive.

Goldman stresses that epistemic censorship or regulation can be justified only if experts control the distribution of information. He obviously assumes that experts exist and he differentiates between reputational and objective experts that are comparatively the best guides to truth (or at least superior to escaping false beliefs). He considers truth-revealing situations as situations in which anyone can assess that someone is an objective expert because he successfully deals with the problem. Not only should such experts control information conveyed to people (schools, commercials or like) with the aim of better truth-acquisition but experts (for instance, judges) may withdraw the relevant and true information to the persons (jury) who makes a decision if she judges that this very information can interfere with the formation of true belief.

On one side, it seems that epistemic paternalism, grounded on empirical facts about human reasoning, really tracks the most reliable routes to attain truth (or correct answers) in society. On the other side, a practice of communicational control, even if we assume suboptimal epistemic circumstances and the existence of experts, implies serious ethical problem of censorship that violates the value of autonomy and the rights of each person on information accession. However, it would be definitely disappointing to conclude that epistemic paternalism is an epistemically desirable and an ethically unacceptable epistemic practice. As well as it would be unacceptable that epistemologists accept the practice while ethics do not want do the same. The perspective of a hybrid view that aims to harmonize ethical and epistemic goods gives us a promising framework for evaluating epistemic paternalism as a virtuous or socially desirable, or a non-desirable practice.

¹⁵ See in C.R. Sunstein 2006.

¹⁶ See in D.Gigone and R.Hastie, 1993, p. 960.

3.2. Epistocracy

The import of epistemic value of truth or correctness into a democratic decision-making process generates the serious problem of epistocracy or the institutional practice that privileges the opinions of experts. If we are searching for truth, correctness, problem solving or other outcomes of the highest epistemic value, there is no reason not to privilege the opinions of experts more than others because they are trained to be more efficient in dealing with various problems. On the other side, it reminds us of the Plato's *kalipolis*, a pretty radical version of epistocracy or political legitimacy based on wisdom that is found to be democratically unacceptable.

In the debate on the epistemic justification of democracy, numerous philosophers elaborated various arguments against epistocracy.¹⁷ Some participants in the debate claim that, while there are experts in science, a similar experts' status is not appropriate for ethics or politics. The mere fact that someone knows more is incapable of justifying her coercing another person to obey her stance; partly because the other person might not accept that she knows better what to do. Other authors add that even if there are experts in ethics and politics, experts should not be privileged because all citizens have equal right to participate/vote. The idea of privileged experts, in spite of the attractiveness of possible decisions of higher epistemic quality, presents a distortion of the ethical project.

On the other side, it can be said that judgments based on a discussion in which participants come as equals, and in which the goal is to satisfy all, do not guarantee an epistemic value. The viewpoints that defend some sort of consensus as the aim of good deliberation would not earn the label 'epistemic', because the attainment of consensus would not be an epistemological contribution to democracy.¹⁸

Similarly as in the situation of epistemic paternalism, it is not a solution to conclude that while epistocracy can be desirable from the epistemological point, it is not desirable from the ethical or political one. Hybrid view can be a framework in which the imbalance or conflict of epistemic and ethical/political virtues should be recognized and resolved. However, as we have concluded above, Fricker's promising idea of hybrid virtue will have a proper role only if it is conceptualized as a norm that harmonizes ethical/political and epistemic aims in a consistent way (in which neither ethical nor epistemic rationale will be privileged).

¹⁷ See, for instance, D. Estlund 2003., 2008., F. Peter 2008., P. Kitcher 2011.

¹⁸ A.I. Goldman 2010.

4. *A hybrid view*

The scope of my final conclusion here is rather limited. I do not offer a proposal of some elaborate hybrid view on virtue, but I would like to argue that the appropriate area for this debate is social epistemology in which social situatedness of knowledge is recognized and I would like to argue that already presented solutions on epistemic justice, epistemic paternalism and epistocracy cannot be used as appropriate frameworks for the desirable hybrid view.

Firstly, stressing the need for the hybrid view, I do not imply that there is no need for an exclusively epistemological or exclusively ethical or politically normative approach. On the contrary, I would like only to stress that there are problems that cannot be suitably resolved by isolated epistemological and ethical assessment, and that the hybrid view would be a useful normative perspective for such a cases.

Secondly, I would like to situate the debate about hybrid view inside social epistemology, a branch of traditional epistemology that studies the epistemic properties of individuals that arise from their relations to others, but also the epistemic properties of social practices, groups and social systems.¹⁹ In social epistemology, the epistemic subject is always recognized in the context of a relevant community and beliefs or knowledge, belief producing practices, knowing and content of knowledge, which are all considered socially situated.

Thirdly, it is worth to notice that the hybrid view is a continuation or expansion, but not a revision of standard analytical epistemology: epistemic criteria that need to be applied to knowledge/belief producing practices are truth, justification etc. but in the hybrid view the normativity is dissociated exclusively from the (socially) independent idea of truth and it is recognized that the knowledge/belief producing process can be (un)just or (un)ethical. Legitimate but limited epistemic or ethical normative approaches are here expanded in a more comprehensive approach. As we could see above, a purely epistemically justified attitude or social practice is not necessary a socially desirable epistemic practice: alleged epistemic acceptability of epistemic paternalism does not mean that it needs to be recommended. Similarly, ethically inculpable attitude such as credibility excess is definitely not socially recommendable. Hybrid view expands the traditionally isolated normative approaches and evaluates epistemic agents (individuals, groups, institutions) and epistemic practice also in the context of the ethical or political consequences they generate.²⁰

¹⁹ A. Goldman 2010.

²⁰ For instance, the philosophers that explicitly pled for the expansionist social epistemology are M. Fricker, 2007., A. Goldman 2010., L. Code, 2010.

Three possible solutions are raised from the debates about mentioned epistemic practices: (i) The ethics of knowing, (ii) The politics of knowing and (iii) Veritism. The proposed stances aimed to evaluate the acceptability of credibility excess, epistemic paternalism and epistocracy, according to my opinion can't be the proper candidates for a hybrid account because they all privilege either epistemological or ethical/political values. As we can see above, in her ethics of knowledge when she is faced with the imbalance between ethical and epistemic values, Fricker reduces hybrid virtue to the ethical and declares the priority of ethical value over the epistemic one. Epistemically culpable but ethically innocent cases of credibility excess can be virtuous; credibility excess is not a proper case of socially undesirable practice in spite of clear epistemic culpability. The politics of knowledge is a position that can be read from Estlund's or Peter's criticism of epistocracy. They defend the priority of political value over epistemic one. Epistemically culpable but politically inculpable cases are seen as virtuous. In spite of the clear epistemic advantages, epistocracy is declared as a socially undesirable epistemic practice because of its anti-democratic character. Finally, Goldman's veritism prioritises epistemic values over ethical values. Ethically culpable but epistemologically valuable cases can be virtuous: epistemic paternalism is a socially desirable practice in spite of its ethically dubious properties.

Consequently, the crucial assumption of hybrid view is that epistemological and ethical/political values have the same weight in a sense that epistemological value should not be sacrificed to ethical/political or vice versa. In the hybrid view, the plausible idea that with respect to some issues some people know more than others with a commitment to ethical/political ideals and principles, needs to be integrated. Also, it needs to be decided how to integrate the plausible ideas of epistemic wrongness of prejudicial judgments, with the idea that it produces outcomes of different ethical valence. This principal view about the balance between values needs to be differentiated from further elaboration of the procedure of evaluation or from a metrological view. For sure, the principal stance is easier to defend than evaluative methodology or a particular case of the conflict of values.

With full awareness about the further challenges for hybrid view, I would like here only to roughly sketch the minimal conditions of epistemic and ethical/political responsibility that need to be fulfilled in order to ascribe hybrid virtue to an attitude, a practice or an institution: the minimal condition of epistemic responsibility is that epistemic agents (individuals, groups, institutions) must not rely on the false beliefs or prejudicial stereotypes and that they need to be epistemically conscientious or motivated to arrive at truth and to avoid error (problem solution or like); the minimal condition of ethical/political responsibility consists of the requirement that epistemic agents (individuals, groups,

institutions) need to not egoistically prefer their own stance over the stances of other epistemic agents and that they need to be sensitive to values of irreducible pluralism, diversity, critical interaction and inclusiveness. It cannot be virtuous, in a hybrid sense, a practice which does not satisfy these minimal conditions, albeit it does not need to be equally epistemically or ethically equally valuable. A practice that satisfies the minimal ethical condition can be epistemically highly valuable and at the same time virtuous in hybrid sense. For instance, from the perspective of the hybrid view, epistemic paternalism can be a virtuous practice only if it finds a solution for the problem of violated values of pluralism, diversity, critical interaction and inclusiveness. Goldman himself, for instance, offers some solutions in form of adversarial system of discourse.²¹ Similarly, credibility excess cannot be virtuous practice as long as it does not satisfy the minimal epistemic condition that requires the lack of prejudicial assessment. Epistocracy can be considered as virtuous only if we assume a certain division of epistemic labour in which the role of experts would not violate the interest of citizens.²² To summarize, in the case of conflict between epistemic and ethical/political aims, through consideration of a variety of perspectives, epistemic agents need to seek the best balance among ethically/politically permissible and factually well grounded stances. Conflict between values and some sort of contextual trade-off of values call for a mediating value of *phronesis* or practical wisdom: a wise person is able to weigh the demands of the relevant virtues in a given situation (contextually, all things considered).

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²¹ A.I. Goldman 1996.

²² See for instance in T. Christiano, 2008., 2012.

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