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have known it. Just to give a simple example, if you're a doctor, you may not have looked at the most recent journal of pediatrics. But if you're a pediatrician, and there was something in that journal that was crucial to your treatment of your patient, you should have known that because it was your professional responsibility to know that. So, what I wanted to try to do

is to understand what makes it true that you should have known something even if you didn't currently have the evidence that you needed to know it. What still makes it true that you should have known it? That's what I was trying to present in that paper.

My impression was that there were many assumptions in your analysis of this

matter, and, if I may, it was oversimplified, especially in terms of intelligence. Because you seem to assume that all the subjects might be on the same level of intelligence.

Yeah, I fear that that criticism is probably true of a good deal of my work. So, let me see what I can do to try to assuage your worries here. Because I think you're right that I'm making a number of simplifying assumptions.

What I'm really after in these papers and throughout this book is a theoretical account of how we can hold each other to account in our beliefs, judgments, and opinions. You're quite right that I assume that, certainly if you have evidence that if you are able to judge on the basis of them you judge reasonably, then, if you don't judge reasonably on the basis of your evidence, my theory is going to suggest that we can hold you to account. We can say, "Come on! You should

have known this. You have the evidence."

But I want you to go even stronger. I wanted to create a theory where you could hold me accountable. You know that I'm a professor at Northwestern. Suppose that as a professor at Northwestern, there are things that I should know. For example, suppose I didn't know the practices at Northwestern. I wanted a theory where you could say to me, "Sandy, I know that you didn't look into this, but you should have looked into this and you should have known."

In order for me to create a theory that can generate that, I do need to assume the basic competencies of people. So, that's true. If a person fails in competently judging on the basis of evidence or doesn't do her job, my theory is going to suggest that, in fact, we can give her a downgrade. We can say she should have known.

I wanted to mention, with that point in mind, that those who argue about ableism and things like that might criticize your work for not being fair to the diversity of society.

Excellent. So, what you've just done is you've put a little note in my head where I have to think about that one further. Because I think that's a fair worry to have. I'm going to write you and the rest of the folks an IOU. I'm going to try to think about this one further.

Chapter 10 of your book is titled 'If That Were True I Would Have Heard about It by Now'. Can you elaborate on your points in that chapter?

Yeah. Here, I was thinking about a number of our ways of actually reading newspapers. This may be of some interest to you. I was thinking about what happens when I hear something about some big piece of news, and I haven't read it in any of the newspapers that I follow. I do try to follow, not always well, but I do try to follow newspapers not just from the United States. I follow at least one newspaper in the UK, the Guardian.

When I hear something from someone that's a big piece of news that I haven't read in any of the newspapers that I follow, I realize that I will often take the fact that it wasn't reported as a reason for skepticism about the report. What kind of skepticism is it? I say to myself, "Ah, if that were true, I would have heard about it by now through the New York Times, the Washington Post, or the Guardian." There is a bit of a left-leaning bias in many of the newspapers that I read, I must admit.

So, I was basically trying to ask, "Is there a condition under which that kind of reasoning is good?" Because a lot of times in epistemology, we say the absence of evidence is not evidence of absence. Just because you haven't heard about it doesn't mean that it doesn't exist. So, my question was, "Is there ever a case where the fact that I haven't heard about it is a good reason for skepticism?" The answer is yes, and

in that paper, I tried to lay out the conditions under which that's an okay form of reasoning.

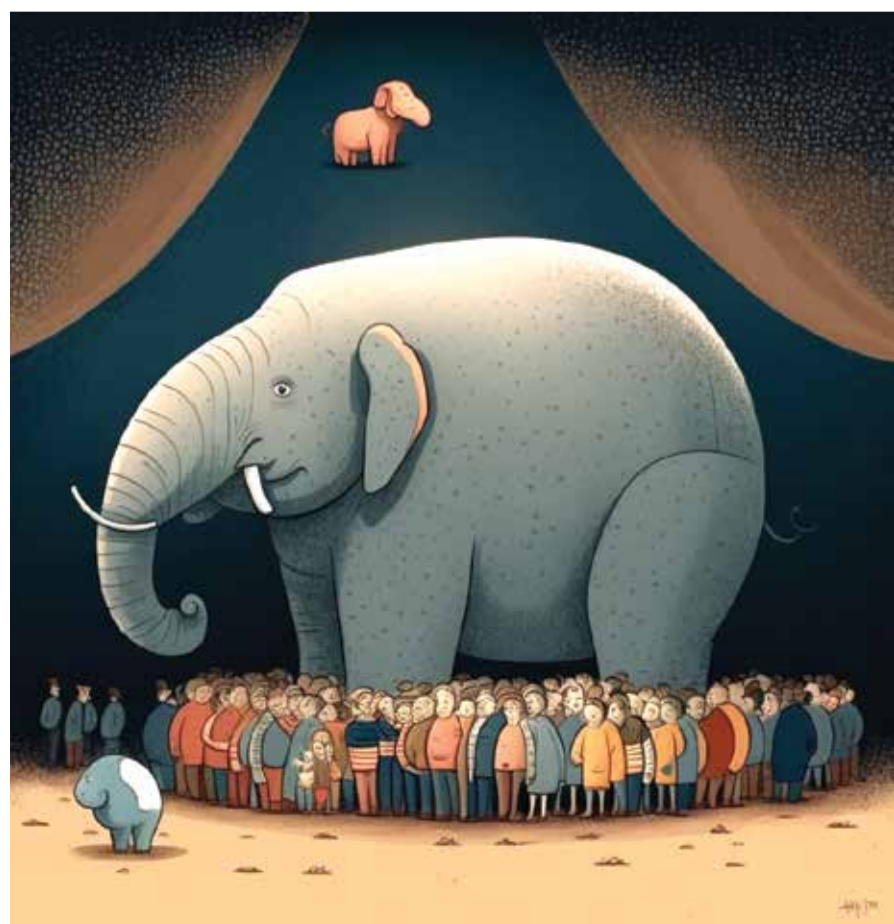
What are those conditions? You have to have what I call "coverage". Coverage is an important one. This is an area where, for example, someone like me who's in a bubble on the political left may not have the coverage that I think I have. There may be some kinds of news out there that don't get reported in papers. And if that's true, I don't have coverage on those. And if I don't have coverage on those, this kind of reasoning is no good. It will lead me often to errors.

So, I need to have coverage. The sources that I rely on need to be competent. That is, it needs to be true that if there were news, they would report it competently. Third, there needs to be enough time so that they had time to investigate it. If there's some-

thing that just happened like 15 minutes ago in the city of Chicago, I can't possibly expect the New York Times to know about it in 15 minutes. So, enough time needs to have gone by. And I need to be such that I am situated so that I would get a report if there were one. So, I can't be, for example, in a house in the middle of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan with no connection to the internet and no connection to newspapers. I must be situated in such a way that I'm regularly getting the news reports that are coming in, whether in the morning newspaper or through the internet.

So, if all those conditions are satisfied, I think I can reasonably reason that if I didn't hear about it, the chance is low that it's actually true. And that may lead me to doubt whatever is being said.

TO BE CONTINUED



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