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you made. It turns out there's a lot of news that is important that we're not getting. That's absolutely true. That's why we have to diversify our news sources. I think that's why we also have to have a sense of what kinds of news are being reported and what kinds of news aren't being reported in those newspapers we rely on. And even the best of us is going

to make mistakes and won't recognize that. All of us have to have the intellectual humility to recognize we will often reason badly using the kind of reasoning I was talking about in that paper

In Chapter 10, you talk about "Epistemically Engineered Environments." What's that? If you think about commu-

nities as trying to generate and disseminate and evaluate knowledge, what I was asking in that paper is: "Are there things we can do in our communities, perhaps not as individuals, to make our communities better at the job of either generating or disseminating or evaluating knowledge? Can we engineer our epistemic environments in ways that increase the chance that the information that is produced is high-grade and decrease the chance that it's low-grade and increase the amount of high-grade and decrease the amount of low-grade inflammation?"

So, what I was really trying to do is ask what features of our community — and there are many, many, many of them — are amenable to tinkering in ways that would enable us to enhance the goodness of the information we're producing.

At the beginning of Chapter 11, you made an interesting hypothetical scenario, which revolved around deciding the humidity of the outside environment based on the testimony of a person or a device. And you said

that they are epistemically different. But if the device is the result of the knowledge of some people put into a physical form — that is to say, the device is the testimony of some scientists — why do you say they are epistemically different? Excellent. I will say that your point here is a point that was made to me very forcefully by a student on whose dissertation committee I sat many years ago. He made me realize that it's easy to overstate the difference, but still, there's an important difference. So, let me see if I can get at that difference.

If you take testimony from me, you can hold me accountable in the sense that if I didn't have good evidence, you can actually regard me as having done something that I ought not to have done. You can downgrade me in this respect.

We actually don't downgrade instruments in the same way. We don't hold instruments accountable; that's the better way to put it. But you're Right: What we do is hold instrument-makers accountable. But I want to point out that we hold them accountable in different kinds of ways. So, when I say to you, for example, "Here's the weather today," you hold me accountable with respect to the truth of what I just told you. That's not the way that we hold people accountable when they make a machine or an instrument. We hold them accountable for its doing what they said it would do. And that is, I think, a different kind of holding accountable. It's holding them accountable for, as it were, what's in the background of the production of the machines, information, or what it's representing about the environment.

But I can't say to the maker of the instrument, "Hey, you just told me it was 74 degrees, and it's not." They will say, "We didn't tell you anything. Our instrument may have represented that. But let's see if that is the fault of our instrument or the fault of your setting it up improperly." There's a very different kind of responsibility you're holding accountable in that case. It is there, but it's much more distributed. And I think that actually has important epistemic implications that I

tried to go into in one paper or another.

On the same subject, let's suppose that you are in a flooded basement, and someone comes from the outside environment and says, "It's actually very bright outside. There is too much light there. Maybe you have lost the track of days and nights. It's daytime." In your analysis, you have a very atomic understanding of the human intellect, and that enables you to contrast that person's testimony with that of a device. But without that atomic understanding, you could make the same remarks about, say, the eyes of that person. Let me just make sure I've understood you here. Are you saying that we can think of people as very sophisticated devices?

What I'm trying to say is that, I put the brain and analytical parts aside. That's what defines the person. However, that person also has eyes. Their eyes might make a mistake. The same applies to their hands. Or their other senses. They are devices in a way. And that brain can make the same claim that the pro-

ducer of that device makes. That's a nice point. What I want to say is that human beings do something that mere devices don't, and that is we vouch for the truth of something. And I actually think that is not merely representing information or presenting information as true. In vouching for something, I might even say to you, "You can take my word for it. Trust me on this. I assure you that what I'm saying is true." My thought, the thought that's guided me not just in social epistemology but also my thinking about the nature of our use of language, is that when I say to you, "You can take my word for it," what I do is I introduce a scenario where you now are entitled to hold me accountable in a way, I think, no machine is ever held accountable. I make myself accountable to you in doing that. And I think that's actually very different. That's one of the big differences that I think differentiates human testifiers from mere mechanisms. Mere mechanisms might well represent how things are, and my eyes might well represent how things are. But notice it's not my eyes that tell you. In fact, I would argue it's not even my mouth that tells you.

It's me who tells you, and that's the difference.

That was a good argument. I have one more question, which is about artificial intelligence. In many examples in your work, we can talk about the interference, someone might say, that artificial intelligence is making in our lives. Do you have epistemic contemplations about artificial intelligence as well?

I have a really lovely colleague here at Northwestern whose name is also Mohammad. He's a computer engineer. About once a year, he asks me to come and talk about artificial intelligence and philosophy. The one thing I have learned is that when I talked to his students, I realized that there's a lot more sophistication in artificial intelligence than I certainly was aware of when I was coming up through the graduate school. So, I do think a lot about artificial intelligence these days, but I've tried to be a little bit less confident of my views, in part because what I see in artificial intelligence is so far beyond anything I imagined that I'm not sure I have the right to any confident views on the matter. That's the way I would put it.

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