In the essay, I plan to tackle two problems. First, I want to tackle Lackey's dualist solution to the justification of testimony. In her paper, Lackey[1] offers an account of testimonial justification that synthesizes aspects of reductionism and anti-reductionism. I argue that her solution falls to the same case that renders reductionism untenable. Second, I want to tackle the distinction between reductionism and anti-reductionism itself. In my view, the distinction is artificial: they have been talking past each other. I argue that these two strands tackle different senses of knowledge. Instead of being adversarial, they are complimentary. I contend that these two views are in fact consistent with each other and by taking this position, we could resolve the problems that plague the justification of testimony.

I shall structure the essay as follows. First, I will outline the two general strands of testimonial justification: reductionism and anti-reductionism. I will lay out their general theses, and the cases against them. Next, I will follow Lackey in sketching out her dualist solution and argue that her dualist position falls to the child-infant case that plagues reductionist testimonial justification. Then, I will try to dissolve the reductionist/anti-reductionist distinction. À la Sosa[2], I will distinguish the two senses of knowledge: animal knowledge and reflective knowledge. In view of these two senses, I will argue that the reductionists appeal to reflective knowledge, and the anti-reductionists, animal knowledge. Subsequently, these two views are complimentary. I contend that this holism avoids all the pitfalls above. In the following section, I give a detailed sketch of the essay.

Reductionism is the strand with the thesis: for all testimonial beliefs, such beliefs are justified by perception, memory, and inference[3]. Within this strand, there are two views: global reductionism and local reductionism. Global reductionism contends that all testimonial beliefs are justified qua testimony as a family of ways of knowing grounded in perception, memory, and inference. Local reductionism contends that testimonial beliefs are justified in this instance iff one has positive reason to the extent it is rational to believe the testimony.

Against global reductionism, Lackey[4] argues that testimony is a heterogeneous group: there is no reason to think that because testimony is reliable, this instance of testimony is reliable. For example, given a layperson in mathematics, her reliability in testifying what she ate for breakfast does not justify her reliability for testifying a mathematical theorem. While it may be true testimony qua testimony is reliable, it is orthogonal to how we should think about testimonial justification.

Against local reductionism, Lackey[5] argues against the sufficiency of positive reason. Consider the following case: Anna is a reliable testifier about people who know about birds: throughout our years of knowing her, we have sufficient evidence by way of perception, memory, or inference that she is reliable. Anna testifies that Bob is a reliable testifier about birds. Bob testifies that pelicans have the largest wingspan out of all birds. Unbeknownst to us, Bob is an unreliable testifier: he lies about birds. We have excellent positive reason to believe in Bob's testimony; we are not justified in believing Bob's testimony. Local reductionism fails.

[1] Lackey, 'It Takes Two to Tango'.
[2] Sosa, 'A Virtue Epistemology'.
[3] Lackey, 'It Takes Two to Tango'.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Ibid.

Anti-reductionism is the strand with the theses: (a) one has the presumptive right to believe in testimony iff there is no defeater, and (b) the testimony must track truth. Lackey[6] argues anti-reductionism allows for gullibility. Consider the following case: an alien drops a journal that testifies: "A lion has eaten three of us." The testimony is true. We happen to come by this journal by accident. We read the journal. There is no defeater. We are justified in believing the testimony; we are not justified in believing the testimony: we are gullible. Anti-reductionism fails.

From the negative cases above, Lackey diagnoses the following problems for each strand: a lack of external reliability for reductionism, and the lack of the necessity for positive reasons for anti-reductionism. Lackey[7] advances the following dualist solution: (a) testimonial beliefs are justified only if one has positive reason to the extent that it is not irrational to believe the testimony, and (b) the testimony must track truth; it takes two to tango. Per Lackey, this view avoids the problems above.

I argue that Lackey's position falls to the child-infant case the same way reductionism falls. If positive reason is a necessary condition for testimonial knowledge, a child who does not have enough knowledge about the world cannot have justified testimonial beliefs. While Lackey argues that her position does not fall to the same criticism because her threshold for justification is lower: not irrational vs. rational. I will argue that even such a low threshold does not allow for the child to have justified testimonial beliefs.

For my positive thesis, I want to advance a holistic view: reductionism and anti-reductionism are consistent and complimentary. Sosa[8] makes the following distinction between the two senses of knowledge: animal knowledge and reflective knowledge. Briefly, animal knowledge is simply reliable: there is no other reason to believe it; reflective knowledge is based on reflection upon the reliability of beliefs. I will elaborate on this further in the essay. In view of this distinction, I will show how the intuition for anti-reductionism and reductionism maps onto them, how this mapping implies a complimentary relationship, and how such relationship allows for the avoidance of the problems above. (885 words)

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[6] Ibid.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Sosa, 'A Virtue Epistemology'.

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