



On the Origin of Pharmaceutical Fraud

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Abstract: In this paper, we argue that epistemic virtues and vices are not fixed sets of traits but are instead historically contingent and reflect considerations that are often ignored by epistemologists. We use the scientific and commercial efforts of Francis Stewart and Parke, Davis & Co. during the turn of the 20th century to describe one origin point for what one of us (Holman), has termed *the fundamental antagonism*: the tension between reformers who seek to make scientific practice more responsive to good evidence and those whose primary motivations are instead commercial in character. We argue that the fundamental antagonism – at least as far as it relates to the behavior of the pharmaceutical industry in the United States – originated in the efforts to transform the drug innovation process along scientific and ethical lines. At the same time, we suggest, these changes in scientific practice were intertwined with a profound transformation in the ethical framework in which the orthodox medical community, government officials, and drug manufacturers themselves operated. This new framework fundamentally altered the set of epistemic virtues considered necessary to conduct reliable inquiry as well as the corresponding vices, including the birth of pharmaceutical fraud.