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Pedophilia, Minor-Attracted Persons, and the DSM: Issues and Controversies
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“Is Anybody Out There?": Testimony of Minor-Attracted Persons and Hearing versus Listening to their Voices

Nancy Nyquist Potter, Ph.D.

Professor of Philosophy, University of Louisville, Louisville, KY / President, Association for the Advancement of Philosophy and Psychiatry

Genuine listening is a virtue, and one that is necessary if the voices of those attracted to minors are going to participate in the construction of the new DSM. Such participation is required in order to ensure that we have good science and ethical grounding that can go forward for diagnosis and treatment, while minimizing stigma and damage toward minor-attracted persons.

To this end I make a distinction between ‘hearing’ and ‘listening’ and argue that those creating DSM-V need to cultivate a virtue in order for genuine listening to occur. This paper has three parts. First, I will argue that:

1) Hearing but not listening amounts to doing an injustice to minor-attracted persons. 2) Listener injustice (what I will refer to as ‘testimonial injustice’) is a result of prejudice, assumptions, and biases against the social identity of the speaker. 3) Testimonial injustice impedes scientific theory and practice that harms all involved in concern for and about minor-attracted persons. 4) Prejudice against speakers can be corrected by cultivating a virtue—a virtue I call ‘giving uptake.’

In the second section, I will set out the idea of ‘uptake’ as a kind of genuine listening and explain why it is a corrective to testimonial injustice. Consider a familiar sort of exchange:

‘How did the council meeting go? Were they receptive to your ideas?’

‘No, it was like talking to a wall. I didn’t get any uptake at all.’

This common linguistic use of ‘uptake’ disguises the depth and complexity of uptake as a virtue—yet most people have a grasp of its intuitive sense. I unpack the philosophical idea of ‘uptake’ as it applies to minor-attracted persons and explain how giving uptake will strengthen the construction of the DSM-5 as well as result in more ethical treatment of minor-attracted persons.

Of course, speakers have to have certain virtues too—namely, that of accuracy and sincerity, and in the third part I discuss the responsibility of speakers to be trustworthy to their audiences. This paper is designed to open up the space for the appropriate giving of uptake, most immediately at the conference itself.