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***Testimonial Injustice and Trust***

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**Introduction**

**Themes from Testimonial Injustice and Trust**

Testimonies, or the transmission of information, often trough assertions, from speakers to hearers have a specific epistemological vulnerability problem: While what we come to know and understand is highly dependent on the cognitive labour and epistemic contributions of others, to form our beliefs merely on the grounds of a speaker’s words would be epistemically irresponsible, particularly since testifiers are capable of lying, deception, or error; hence, we require further justification for testimonial belief. Moreover, the *capability of epistemic contribution* (Fricker 2015), that is, to convey knowledge or other kinds of epistemic input (e.g. evidence, interpretations, and critical ideas) conducive to knowledge and understanding is dependent on communicative reciprocation or appropriate uptake by an audience. This raises questions about how we ought to assess testimony or testifiers or allow ourselves a critical stance, without violating the norm of due epistemic respect owed to speakers. An upshot of these considerations is that the moral attitudes that we bring to testimonial practices, e.g. trust and respect, can also be immediately relevant to our epistemic engagements. Specifically, we can *wrong* testifiers by unjustifiably discrediting their testimony or disbelieving them. The harm we can inflict on others in their capacity as *knowers* (Fricker 2007, 44) or epistemic agents more generally, and *epistemic contributors* in particular, has been a subject of much philosophical inquiry in recent times and it is the entry point for some overlaps between the ethics and epistemology of testimony. Anscombe’s (1979, 150) phrase, ‘[i]t is an insult and it may be an injury not to be believed’ is sometimes cited to motivate and underscore inquiries into whether we *epistemically* owe anything to testifiers and concerns about the conditions under which they might fail to convey their testimony. Let us call this ‘testimonial wronging’.

A common suggestion for distinguishing testimony from other sources of knowledge and information, such as perception as well as (certain conceptions of) memory, is that it involves an attitude of *trust towards others or trusting others* (e.g. Fricker 1998; Origgi 2004; Moran 2005, 2018; Faulkner 2007; McMyler 2011). This renders both hearers and speakers vulnerable in particular ways. While epistemologists of testimony have been mainly focusing on how trust (or which conception of trust) allows hearers to *justifiably accept testimony* or *believe a testifier* and their vulnerabilities involved, more recent work in social epistemology highlights the vulnerabilities of *speakers*; what they (justifiably) trust the hearer for and what it means for this trust to be betrayed. One way to put these differential vulnerabilities is suggested by Dormandy, who argues that a hearer trusts a speaker for ‘representational epistemic goods’, such as knowledge or evidence, making themselves vulnerable to ‘misinformation, to practical mishaps, or to a strained relationship with the speaker should her testimony turn out to be false or careless’ (Dormandy 2020, 247). In turn, the speaker trusts the hearer mainly for ‘recognitional epistemic goods’, which consist in the right response to a speaker’s epistemic agency or to their status as a knower. Accordingly, testimony could make speakers vulnerable to flawed responses that deprive them of such recognitional epistemic goods, thereby undermining their epistemic agency. For example, Fricker’s central case of *testimonial injustice* concerns the distinct epistemic wrong in which a hearer attributes a deflated level of credibility to a speaker owing to a *negative* *identity prejudice* against the speaker (Fricker 1998; Fricker 2007, 30-59). Such an identity prejudice attacks at least one of two components of epistemic trustworthiness, namely competence and sincerity. (Fricker 2007, 32) One of the main examples that Fricker discusses to illustrate such prejudicial silencing of testifiers is Anthony Minghella’s screenplay of *The Talented Mister Ripley* and Herbert Greenleaf’s response, “Marge, there’s female intuition, and then there are facts.” (9) The identity prejudice operating in this testimonial exchange deflates the credibility of Marge’s testimony by challenging her epistemic competence as a woman, as opposed to the excessive epistemic competence assigned to men.

A number of philosophers have further developed the idea that testimonial wronging relates to unwarranted attributions of *credibility* to a testifier, such as credibility excess or deficit (e.g. Jones 2002; Maitra 2010; Medina 2011; Hazlett 2017; Lackey 2018, 2020; Kawall 2019). Some accounts question the centrality of credibility in identifying testimonial wronging and instead focus on the general epistemic importance of *relationships of trust and recognition*, and the value of *being trusted* (e.g. Townley 2003; Marsh 2011; Jones 1999, 2012). Relatedly, some suggest going beyond identity prejudice and objectification and to conceptualize the wrong of testimonial injustice as a more general problem of *(mis)-recognition* or *subject/other relation* (e.g. McConkey 2004; Pohlhaus Jr. 2014; Medina 2018). Moreover, while Fricker conceptualizes her central case of testimonial injustice as an *epistemic vice*, Medina (2013, 30-40) introduces further epistemic vices that can deprive speakers of recognitional epistemic goods, such as *epistemic arrogance or laziness*, where inquirers simply decline to engage with particular informants, hence pointing to the relationship between active or wilful ignorance and epistemic injustice.

These accounts primarily focus on how *certain types of speakers* are wrongfully assessed, unduly discredited or simply ignored and neglected. However, there are other ways in which hearers can harmfully respond to speakers that directly relate to what the speaker says or the *content* of their testimony. Dotson identifies a particular form of testimonial oppression that coerces speakers to silence themselves, namely *testimonial smothering,* which likely occurs under three circumstances: ‘1) the content of the testimony must be unsafe and risky; 2) the audience must demonstrate testimonial incompetence with respect to the content of the testimony to the speaker; and 3) testimonial incompetence must follow from, or appear to follow from, pernicious ignorance.’ (Dotson 2011, 244; for a case study on genocide denial, see e.g. Altanian 2021) According to Dotson, testimonial incompetence is a state possessed by a hearer, signifying the failure ‘to demonstrate to the speaker that she/he will find proffered testimony accurately intelligible’ (Dotson 2011, 245). Respectively, one could argue that a speaker also trusts a hearer to *exercise testimonial competence*, including ‘to do what it takes to hear what she intends to communicate’ (Dormandy 2020, 256). Furthermore, and particularly relevant in contexts of social injustice, a speaker trusts the hearer to *respect any emotional or practical risks* that a speaker might expose herself to, namely when testifying to ‘experiences of marginalization to someone who is likely to have trouble relating, especially if their shared conceptual framework cannot easily bridge their disparate backgrounds’ (257). Such accounts suggest that negative identity prejudices can only account for some cases of testimonial wronging. Other cases focus on the content of testimony and pernicious failures, on behalf of hearers, to *comprehend* testimony. This can be owed to what Dotson describes as *situated ignorance*, which ‘follows from one’s social position and/or epistemic location with respect to some domain of knowledge. It is an “unknowing” that is prompted by social positioning that fosters significant epistemic differences among diverse groups’ (2011, 248). However, hearers can also actively and explicitly, and therefore culpably display incomprehension of the meaning of a speaker’s words, ‘in order to dismiss that speech and the agent who made that speech’ (Cull 2019; see also Dotson 2012 on ‘contributory injustice’). Such cases are sometimes mere *rhetorical contestations* of testimony employed to derail the conversation or simply not to have to engage in it. There are various ways in which ignorance or incomprehension can be actively sustained in order to dismiss testimony and testifiers and thereby keep oneself from learning about issues that might be too unsettling (see e.g. Pohlhaus Jr. 2012).

In summary, these accounts of testimonial wronging focus on somewhat flawed or dysfunctional mechanisms in how testimony is comprehended, interpreted and received, bringing scholarship in testimonial injustice into conversation with philosophy of language in general and speech act theory in particular (see e.g. Kukla 2014; Peet 2017). Such accounts, however, can still be related in ethically and epistemically relevant ways to the identity and social location of both the speaker and hearer as well as the context in which testimony is proffered, particularly under conditions of social injustice, where failures to exercise testimonial competence will likely be persistent and systematic.

As this brief overview demonstrates, Fricker’s notion of ‘testimonial injustice’ gave rise to an extensive philosophical debate on the potential harms and wrongs of certain epistemic practices, and testimony in particular. The 18 chapters published in this edited volume engage with some of the core issues related to testimonial injustice and trust in novel and illuminating ways. The articles collected here, divided into four thematic sections, criticize, complement or expand on Fricker’s central case of testimonial injustice and the proposed virtue of testimonial justice, thereby contributing to its better understanding and extending its scope. Moreover, through the application of theories of epistemic injustice, and testimonial injustice in particular, to new real-world cases and contexts, they seek to render our theories and concepts more robust and valuable.

# **Summary of chapters**

Part I offers critiques as well as re-conceptualizations of testimonial justice and injustice and. Sanford C. Goldberg addresses the much debated question of the reconcilability of the traditional norms of epistemology and the norms of justice. In contrast to arguments alleging epistemic partiality in friendship, and arguments that motivate the hypothesis of moral encroachment on the epistemic, Goldberg suggests that an argument from testimonial injustice can best account for the prospect of a normative clash between epistemology (i.e., evidence-based belief and justification) and ethics (i.e., justice). More specifically, there are cases of testimony where an audience responding to a speaker’s testimony cannot simultaneously satisfy both the norms of epistemology and those of justice. However, he objects that the language in which we discuss testimonial injustice (inherited from Fricker 2007) actually obscures the conditions that give rise to such clashes. Using a standard model of conversation, the ‘common ground model’ (associated with Stalnaker and Roberts), Goldberg offers a different reading of testimony, that is, cases of testimony that amount to speech acts, which brings this prospect of a normative clash to light.

In line with such conversational readings of testimony, where the notions of silencing and uptake become central to analyses of testimonial injustice, Carla Carmona offers an account of testimonial injustice in which a *speaker* is identified as the wrongdoer. Here, prejudice works on the part of a speaker in ways that leads to the withholding of knowledge or information from would be hearers because of the wrongful, prejudicial assumption that they lack the capacity to understand or process it correctly. According to Carmona, the prejudicial anticipation, of a lack of uptake presents an extreme yet indirect form of silencing, a ‘testimonial void’ that undermines the epistemic agency of the would be hearer. Carmona illustrates the epistemic damage caused by testimonial void with the example of Meeta, an Indian girl at secondary school in Britain, who because of her strong accent gets either no feedback on her homework or much less feedback compared to her non-marginalized classmates from her English Literature teacher. This deprivation of potentially valuable information makes her feel alienated and leads her to retreat gradually from participating in the classroom, thus eroding her epistemic agency and confirming the teacher’s prejudicial stereotype.

Carolyn M. Cusick argues for a re-conceptualization of the *wrong* of testimonial injustice. Drawing on the works of Ann Cahill and Gaile Pohlhaus Jr., Cusick proposes a re-description of the wrong of testimonial injustice in terms of ‘derivatization’ in place of Fricker’s suggested ‘objectification’. To derivatize, i.e., to ‘turn into a derivative’, according to Cahill (2011, 32) means ‘to portray, render, understand, or approach a being solely or primarily as the reflection, projection, or expression of another beings’ identity, desires, fears, etc.’ Accordingly, Cusick argues that undue credibility denials, characteristic of testimonial injustice, represent acts of wilful misinterpretation of the evidence from victims’ own bodies and lives; while the speaker is treated as a subject, their subjectivity is derivatized from the hearer’s subjectivity. Such a re-conceptualization of the wrong of testimonial injustice gives us a better picture of verbal testimonial exchanges as mutual exchanges between speaker and listener, as requiring both parties’ participation *as epistemic subjects* and as both parties *capable of derivatizing* the other. Furthermore, it helps us to look more carefully at how epistemic agents are treated as *embodied subjects*. The upshot is that for our epistemic engagements to be just, we must approach others as subjects in themselves and not define their epistemic worth by the degree to which their knowledge aligns with our own interests. Nor should we treat others as persons whose body is an extension of our own body, our desires or needs.

Alicia Garcia Álvarez article also engages with some of the worries raised by Cusick, but draws on Seyla Benhabib’s idea of the ‘concrete other’ to re-conceptualize the primary harm of both testimonial and hermeneutical injustice,. Her main objection to Fricker’s account of the primary harm or wrong of these types of epistemic injustice is that by focusing on the wrong done to knowers as ‘universal reasoners’, it neglects how it also constitutes a wrong that is intimately tied to who they are as *individuals*. In doing so, she highlights the individual phenomenology of how epistemic injustice also affects a particular, i.e. ‘concrete knower’. Fricker recognizes the harm done to individuals in their capacity of self-constitution and treats it as a secondary harm of epistemic injustice, whereas Garcia Álvarez argues that it is part of the intrinsic injustice towards those at the receiving end of epistemic injustice. This is because there is always already a ‘proto-understanding’ of the self, based on one’s personal sense or understanding of a given experience and need, which is being violated through epistemic injustice. Accordingly, Garcia Álvarez suggests a definition of the wrong of epistemic injustice as simultaneously *epistemic-affective*: a failure to recognize the other as a concrete knowerwith distinctive contributions to make and whose particular needs and constitution are implicit in her epistemic contributions.

Ji-Young Lee presents a critical appraisal of Fricker’s (2007) hearer-dependent, virtue-responsibilist account of testimonial justice. Lee suggests that we should rely less on the goodwill of prejudiced agents to rectify testimonial injustice and instead suggest more practicable ways to do so, including integrating *bystanders* into the scope of responsibility for redress. Put differently, instead of focusing our efforts towards achieving testimonial justice on the development of good motivations and character traits, the focus should be on monitoring the agents’ *actions and behaviour* and on practicable ways to correct them. While this does not exclude the possibility of acting upon a good character, she argues against reducing efforts for redress to individual virtue cultivation. After all, Lee argues, even a non-virtuous hearer can interrupt an instance of testimonial injustice, by referring to certain conversational norms that a particular collective has agreed to in a given context – for example, in a workplace. Hence, drawing on the work of David Henderson, Lee proposes an account of responsibility for testimonial injustice as *collective behaviour-targeting epistemic interventions*. Here, bystanders are called upon to recognize and intervene when collectively and voluntarily accepted *epistemic norms and rules of conduct* have been violated by signalling to the wrongdoer that behaviour resulting in testimonial injustice is not socially acceptable.

Approaching what Goldberg calls ‘normative clash’ from a different angle, Ray Auerback questions the idea that Fricker’s (2007) proposed central case of testimonial injustice is a distinctly *epistemic* phenomenon, or a distinctly *testimonial* injustice, or correctable by the adoption of an *epistemic virtue theoretic framework*. Relying on criticisms of Fricker by Adam Piovarchy, José Medina and Benjamin R. Sherman, Auerback offers four objections to her core conception of testimonial injustice. First, that testimonial injustice is an *instance* of identity-prejudicial credibility judgment, but not a distinctly testimonial *kind* of injustice. Second, that there is nothing *uniquely epistemic* about the operation of identity-prejudicial credibility deficit in the context of a testimonial exchange; it is rather an *a priori* social-moral phenomenon applied to an epistemic context. Third, identity-prejudicial credibility deficit is not a monolithic phenomenon but one form of a more widely experienced *social and cultural phenomenon* of identity-prejudicial judgements. Finally and relatedly, it has not been shown that a virtue-epistemological framework is necessary or desirable to (self)-correct for testimonial injustice, especially since identity prejudice is a *social phenomenon* and often held unreflectingly.

Part II deals with the question of trust in relation to testimonial injustice. Gloria Origgi abstracts from contexts of social injustice from which Fricker’s conception of identity-prejudicial testimonial injustice is primarily developed and argues that an identity-prejudicial stereotype is one among several further mechanisms that, justifiably or unjustifiably, may bias our credibility judgments. Origgi stresses that we do not place our epistemic trust passively, but use various inferential strategies to work out a *vigilant attitude* towards our informants and the content of the information they provide. Based on this insight, Origgi seeks to offer a finer-grained view of ‘credibility economy’ consisting of a multiple set of strategies that make us epistemically vigilant about the social world around us. She starts by exploring the conditions under which we make an *epistemically responsible* use of various heuristics at our disposal to assess credibility, thus offering an account of a ‘responsible vigilant attitude’. Essentially, such an attitude entails being *actively vigilant*, or *being aware* of the heuristics and biases used in order to filter information. She distinguishes between *internal* and *external vigilance* and details seven mechanisms or sources of trust we may monitor in others and ourselves when we trust or present ourselves as a trustworthy source of information.

J. Adam Carter and Daniella Meehan also offer an account of trust as a particular *attitude* that ought to be properly cultivated, though developing it more closely in relation to the phenomenon of testimonial injustice in an attempt to offer a strategy to combat it. To do so, they suggest using a *performance normativity framework* (PNF) which puts a helpful structure in place for organising a strategy to target what they consider the core problem of testimonial injustice, namely *incompetent trusting*. First, they establish an account of competent trusting according to which the trust *performed* can be evaluated along three dimensions – success, competence, and aptness. Specifically, they point to the following qualities we can reasonably expect will contribute to competent trusting, qualities that involve a suitable reliability threshold when it comes to assessing: (a) others’ abilities and intentions; (b) oneself, including one’s values and beliefs; and (c) expected gains by (and felicity of ) betrayal. Against this background, Carter and Meehan argue that both credibility deficit and credibility excess cases discussed in the testimonial injustice scholarship feature incompetent trusting on the part of the hearer. A strategy to target such incompetent trusting involves not only the cultivation of aforementioned qualities of competent trusting, but also a trust-relevant *metacompetence,* which is an appreciation of the limits of our trusting reliably. This involves good risk assessment abilities when it comes to assessing how one’s reliability at trusting successfully – that is, whether one performs (a)-(c) well – is sensitive to various factors, as well as a capacity to assess when such factors obtain.

Karen Frost-Arnold offers yet another approach to analysing the role of trust in testimonial injustice and strategies to counter it. She focuses on the problem of socially constructed ignorance sustaining epistemic injustice, such as ignorance of one’s privileges and prejudices, and the potential of the testimony of members of oppressed groups to help members of privileged groups overcome their ignorance. Drawing on case studies of online attempts to challenge ignorance, she suggests that a particular kind of trust, namely what Victoria McGeer calls ‘hopeful trust’, can motivate hearers to become cognizant of their privilege and prejudice. Hopeful trust has the potential to overcome the socially constructed, *prima facie* barriers to remedying ignorance about privilege or prejudice. She focuses on three epistemic barriers – (i) the problem of testimonial injustice, (ii) the problem of defensive ignorance, and (iii) the problem of absence of alternative – that heighten the risk faced by oppressed speakers and make the question of speaker’s trust particularly relevant to the problem of hearer ignorance. Hopeful trust can challenge these barriers as well as ignorance because when the speaker engages in a clear act of hopeful trust, one that the hearer recognizes as making the speaker vulnerable, the hearer’s desire to avoid doing harm can be activated. However, she also stresses that decisions about when to trust in this way, and therefore about when, where, how, and with whom to make ourselves vulnerable, are inherently socially situated.

Part III complicates and enhances the conversation around testimonial injustice through its application to specific case studies relevant to the public sphere. Charlotte Knowles raises a number of concerns regarding the tension between (traditional) epistemology and the ethics of testimony. She objects to a narrow understanding of testimony, construed as assertions with a propositional content, for their failure to account for cases where testifiers cannot make assertions or present fully formed propositional knowledge. In such cases, Knowles argues, testifiers should be seen as articulating an affective, embodied and potentially non-propositional understanding of experiences that cannot yet be propositionally intelligible, such as in cases of testimony on gendered violence. Therefore, Knowles suggests a phenomenological conception of testimony, where the truth of testimony may not be immediately available and reportable in the way the more standard model of assertion implies. Her proposed phenomenological approach instead shifts our focus to the conditions of testimony under which these truths can come to light and includes physical, environmental, social, affective, embodied and relational factors. Taking them into account is crucial to understanding whether and how communicative acts can go wrong and how testimony can fail to be genuinely understood or fully articulated. To show this, Knowles draws on and extends Heidegger’s concept of ‘disclosedness’, focusing particularly on the moods of shame and what Kate Manne referred to as ‘himpathy’ as examples to explain how the testimony of victims of gendered violence may be erroneously disbelieved.

Leo Townsend and Dina Lupin draw on the work of Kristie Dotson to argue that there is a distinctive kind of ‘epistemic violence’ in the case of a group’s spokesperson’s speech. Employing Austinian speech act theory, they introduce three felicity conditions of speaking for a group, the non-fulfilment of which by an audience can amount to a distinctive form of silencing in relation to a spokesperson’s speech: *representational authority*, *representational intent*, and *representational uptake*. Based on this, they show that an audience may silence the group as well as the speaker by failing to fulfil the representational uptake condition. Such failure is owed to an audience’s profound ignorance about the political structure of the group, with the result that it is unable to correctly identify the group’s proper representatives. Furthermore, individual speakers are likely coerced to silence themselves when they become aware of being mistaken as speaking for the group, hence when they cannot trust their audience with respect to correctly identifying the group’s proper representative. They illustrate this by reference to *legally mandated consultation* processes with groups affected by legal, policy or administrative decision-making. In particular, they discuss the examples of the REDD+ Programme (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation) launched under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Uganda and Nigeria and the treatment of speech of Aboriginal and Indigenous bureaucrats within the Australian civil service.

Melanie Altanian looks at how conditions of genocide denialism give rise to epistemic injustice specifically as it occurs in relation to practices of genocide remembrance. Drawing on Sue Campbell’s account of relational, reconstructive remembering and particularly of ‘good remembering’, she argues that genocide denialism constitutes in fact a ‘double epistemic wrong’ (Fricker 2007, 159), insofar as it subjects survivors and descendants to *epistemically* *disrespectful challenges* to both their collective memory and individual remembers. The former subjects them to unwarranted institutional constraints on their hermeneutical agency, i.e. hermeneutical oppression, while the latter subjects them to constraints on their testimonial agency, i.e. testimonial oppression. In addition, Altanian argues that testimonial and hermeneutical injustice are crucially interrelated when it comes to such ‘contested’ memory of historical injustice and the biographical testimony it gives rise to. Drawing on Katherine Jenkins’ analysis of ‘rape myths’ as hermeneutical injustice, as well as scholarship on wilful hermeneutical ignorance, Altanian discusses two mechanisms through which this happens: First, through systematic distortions of the very concept of ‘genocide’ and the conditions of its use and second, through the systematic portrayal of survivors and descendants as *vicious rememberers*. This is illustrated with the example of Turkey’s historical and ongoing denialism of the Armenian genocide.

Focusing on the case of development aid, Susanne Koch draws on expert interviews conducted in South Africa and Tanzania to reveal how epistemic injustice is experienced, practiced and institutionalised in a field which claims to work towards global justice. She highlights how epistemic authority in aid-related advisory processes is tied to identity-based prejudice, where the systematic credibility deficit that policy experts from aid-receiving countries suffer is closely interrelated with the credibility excess that the so-called ‘international’ experts profit from. She argues that their privilege is backed by an imaginary that maintains the idea of Northern epistemic superiority and is sustained by prevailing employment and procurement practices of donor organisations. Koch suggests that we can also see the concurrence of testimonial and hermeneutical injustice, which prevents experts from the Global South from taking the lead in interpreting their own societies’ realities. This, she argues, is not only detrimental to the countries whose knowers are marginalised but also a root cause of persisting global inequality.

The concluding chapter of Part III by Olga Lenczewska offers both a critique of Jason Brennan’s epistemic argument for *epistocracy* and a modified account of *political competence* required for participation in an epistocratic council. She specifically criticises Brennan’s understanding of political competence in terms of possessing expert knowledge of political science and economics. Not only is such an account of political competence too narrow and inadequate, but it may further contribute to the marginalization of socially disadvantaged and oppressed people, insofar as they are more likely to lack the resources necessary to acquire such expert knowledge when compared to the members of dominant groups, i.e., mostly white, upper middle- to upper-class, educated, employed men. Instead, Lenczewska draws on *standpoint theory* and arguments from *situated and embodied knowledge* to offer a new account of political competence that is more apt for an epistocratic deliberative council. In particular, she argues that besides possession of, say, social scientific knowledge, people can be politically competent by possessing first-personal experience and knowledge unique to, and acquired through, one’s disadvantaged or oppressed socio-economic situatedness. To bring such potential epistemic privileges and competences to fruition politically, their perspectives and voices should be included in any epistocratic deliberative council.

Part IV continues the discussion of the public spheres of testimonial injustice, but focuses on issues relevant to (public) health. In their chapter, Havi Carel and Ian Kidd focus on institutional rather than individual instances of testimonial justice and injustice. Drawing on Fricker’s (2020) recent work, they first introduce an account of institutional testimonial justice using the idea of an ‘institutional ethos’. A testimonially just institutional ethos requires the right sorts of *values*, of *structures* and *procedures*, as well as of *outcomes* constitutive of testimonial justice in practice. Based on this, Carel and Kidd show how such an institutional ethos can degrade, focusing particularly on one epistemically important institutional failing they call ‘institutional opacity’. Such is a situation in which the institution is increasingly resistant to epistemic assessment and understanding by their agents and, especially, their users, hence thwarting their *testimonial agency*. This makes institutional opacity epistemically problematic because it undermines the values of *trustworthiness*, *transparency*, and *truthfulness* constitutive of an ethos of testimonial justice. Furthermore, they argue that institutional opacity is especially problematic, for persons who are already epistemically *vulnerablized* due to their socially and materially disadvantaged position. They elaborate on the testimonially unjust impact of such individual situational vulnerabilities and institutional opacity with the example of chronically ill persons. Finally, they offer two ameliorative strategies that could repair a deteriorated institutional ethos of testimonial justice.

Giulia Terzian and M. Inés Corbalán build on recent work by Casey Rebecca Johnson and Jennifer Lackey to critically assess our epistemic obligation to voice disagreement. Focusing particularly on science denial (SD) and vaccine hesitancy (VH) discourses, Terzian and Corbalán argue that these cases generate an especially strong duty to voice disagreement due to their propensity to be both practically and epistemically harmful. This is because the lay public crucially depends on expert scientific testimony in order to access warranted, true beliefs about such vital subject matters. However, they argue that since the unconstrained circulation of SD discourse generates confusion over who the experts are and what they are saying, public access to important epistemic goods is compromised and obstructed. Moreover, it leads to the formation of false beliefs, hence qualifying as epistemic harm, and will, in virtue of this, lead to practical harm, too. They then turn to discuss situational features that may function as defeaters of such an obligation. Specifically in VH discourse, voicing disagreement may actually constitute a testimonial injustice towards those expressing VH. This is the case if VH is grounded in well-placed mistrust of vaccine-promoting institutions due to historical institutional misconduct towards affected communities, such as Black Americans.

Quassim Cassam raises similar worries with regard to discourses surrounding vaccine hesitancy. Drawing on Ian Kidd’s account of the ‘critical practice of vice-charging’, he focuses on how charging parents who hesitate to give their children the MMR triple vaccine with gullibility and dogmatism, can itself become vicious. When such vice-charging itself becomes epistemically vicious, it obstructs knowledge of other people and generally hinders attempts to make sense of vaccine hesitancy, in particular, *their* vaccine hesitancy. Thus, he argues, it can constitute an epistemic injustice in which vaccine hesitant parents are represented as less than full epistemic agents. After elaborating on the potential hazards and vices of vice-charging, as well as the type of epistemic injustice at stake here, Cassam makes a case for a more tolerant and inclusive approach not only to vaccine hesitancy but also to other forms of unorthodoxy or non-compliance. The primary objective in these cases should be to resist temptations of hasty vice-charging when confronted with non-conformists, and instead to engage with their reasons and trying to understand why they strike them as good reasons. This is also crucial for policy makers and practitioners in public services, as it enables them to educate a sceptical public about the risks of vaccine hesitancy more effectively. He concludes with a note on the implications of his account for COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy.

By way of complementing the discussion of vaccine hesitancy and other epistemically relevant issues in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic, the concluding chapter by Petr Špecián offers a social epistemological analysis of why democratic countries failed to deal with the challenges posed by it. In particular, he argues that the collective response to the pandemic has been incapacitated by an ‘epistemic crisis’: ‘a breakdown in the social division of epistemic labor that led to a failure of citizens’ beliefs to converge towards a shared perception of the situation.’ Notably, he argues that the emergence of such a crisis and failed political responses was not due to a lack of relevant expert knowledge or citizens’ irrationality. Rather, he locates the problem in the failure of relevant expert testimony to gain democratic legitimacy necessary for an effective policy response. He discusses three obstacles conducive to this: 1) the proper domain of expertise is uncertain; 2) regular citizens’ meta-expertise – (i.e., ability to discriminate among the putative experts based on their relative epistemic merit) – is not efficacious enough to trigger truth-convergence of the public opinion; 3) the prominent sources of third-party meta-expertise lack credibility due to their conflicts of interest. Arguing that the first two problems appear irresolvable, he proposes that the prevention of future epistemic crises requires an interdisciplinary cooperative endeavour of proposing an institutional framework that would provide accessible and credible third-party meta-expertise to the public.

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