Hermeneutical Injustice:
Distortion and Conceptual Aptness

Arianna Falbo

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Abstract

This article develops a new approach for theorizing about hermeneutical injustice. According to a dominant view, hermeneutical injustice results from a hermeneutical *gap*: one lacks the conceptual tools needed to make sense of, or to communicate, important social experience, where this lack is a result of an injustice in the background social methods used to determine hermeneutical resources. I argue that this approach is incomplete. It fails to capture an important species of hermeneutical injustice which doesn't result from a lack of hermeneutical resources, but from the *overabundance* of distorting and oppressive concepts which function to crowd-out, defeat, or preempt the application of a more accurate hermeneutical resource. I propose a broader analysis that better respects the dynamic relationship between hermeneutical resources and the social and political contexts in which they are implemented.

1   Introduction

Scholarship on epistemic injustice has highlighted the importance of hermeneutical resources in facilitating the intelligibility of socially significant experiences.[1] Notably, Fricker (2007) defends a species of epistemic harm that she calls *hermeneutical injustice*. According to this analysis, hermeneutical injustice arises when one attempts to make a socially significant experience intelligible, but can't because one lacks the required hermeneutical tools needed to do so. There is a gap in the inventory of hermeneutical resources that are used to render important social experiences intelligible, where this gap is the result of an injustice in the background social methods used to determine hermeneutical resources.[2] Despite various points of disagreement and further developments upon Fricker's analysis, one key assumption seems to have gained a fairly widespread acceptance. This is that hermeneutical injustice requires a *lacuna*. We can formulate this requirement more precisely as follows.

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[1]Hermeneutical resources include interpretive tools such as: tropes, narratives, stories, scripts, and concepts. For simplicity, and following much of the literature, I will talk mostly in terms of conceptual resources.

[2]See especially: (Fricker; 2007, 1,161-162) and cf. Fricker (2006, 2016, 2017)

The Lacuna Requirement

Hermeneutical injustice requires a lacuna in the hermeneutical repertoire that is used to render socially significant experience intelligible.

The Lacuna Requirement imposes a necessary requirement on the occurrence of a hermeneutical injustice. Accordingly, "hermeneutical injustice occurs . . . when a gap in collective resources puts someone at an unfair disadvantage when it comes to making sense of their social experiences."(Fricker; 2007, 1). A hermeneutical resource is missing from the hermeneutical repertoire and had the concept been available—had the lacuna been filled—the injustice would no longer persist.[3]

In what follows, I argue that a lacuna-centered approach to hermeneutical injustice is incomplete. The Lacuna Requirement entails an overly narrow analysis of hermeneutical injustice and, as a result, it fails to capture an important species of hermeneutical injustice that merits more careful investigation. In particular, this approach fails to recognize a species of hermeneutical injustice that doesn't result from a dearth of hermeneutical resources, but from the *overabundance* of distorting and oppressive concepts which can function to crowd out, defeat, or pre-empt the application of an available and more accurate concept. Focusing on cases of hermeneutical injustice without lacunae highlights the importance of not only novel hermeneutical resources—that is, the need to fill in hermeneutical gaps—but also the importance of acknowledging how those same resources are integrated into extant conceptual frameworks within an overarching social milieu.

In §2, I explain the lacuna-centered approach in more detail. Following, in §3, I argue that, in addition to facilitating intelligibility, hermeneutical resources also serve crucial *productive* functions—they organize and coordinate individuals within a social milieu. In light of this, in §4, I defend cases of hermeneutical injustice which don't result from a conceptual lack, but a conceptual *presence*. In §5, I develop a broader framework for theorizing about hermeneutical injustice which recognizes two distinct species of hermeneutical injustice: *positive* and *negative* hermeneutical injustice.[4] I end by sketching an approach to hermeneutical justice that naturally flows out of this framework.

2   The Lacuna-Centered Analysis

Fricker draws our attention to the emergence of the concept *sexual harassment* in the early 1970s. She details the case of Carmita Wood, who quit her job at Cornell University's Nuclear Physics Department after experiencing persistent and unwanted sexual advances

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[3]This requirement on hermeneutical injustice is adopted widely across recent literature. See, for example, Beeby (2011); Medina (2011, 2012, 2017); Dotson (2012, 2014); Anderson (2017); Goetez (2017); Toole (2019); Vasilyeva and Ayala-López (2019); Dembroff (2020); Dembroff and Whitcomb (Forth).

[4]Thank you to an anonymous referee for suggesting this terminology.

from her boss. He would "jiggle his crotch" while passing her desk and would "deliberately brush against her breasts while reaching for some papers" (Fricker; 2007, 150).[5] When applying for unemployment insurance Wood was required to explain why she had quit, but she found herself at a loss for words. It wasn't shameless flirting or mere office humor that caused her to leave; what she experienced was flat-out sexual harassment. But, since this concept had yet to make its way into collective understanding—let alone onto unemployment insurance forms—Wood couldn't articulate her experience as such. She reported that she had quit for "personal reasons" and was subsequently denied insurance.

Fricker describes Wood's case as a paradigmatic instance of hermeneutical injustice. She says: "Here is a story about how extant collective hermeneutical resources can have a lacuna where the name of a distinctive social experience should be" (2007, 150-151). Accordingly, the hermeneutical injustice Wood faced resulted from a gap in the available stock of hermeneutical resources; there was a lacuna where the concept *sexual harassment* should have been. Moreover, this lacuna is a consequence of an injustice in the background social methods which are used to determine hermeneutical resources. In Fricker's terminology, women like Wood faced *hermeneutical marginalization*: they were not equitably included in the political and legal contexts which serve to define the conditions for unemployment.

According to this approach, the primary harm of hermeneutical injustice concerns a lack of intelligibility resulting from one's hermeneutical marginalization. Fricker says: "the subject is rendered unable to make communicatively intelligible something which it is particularly in his or her interests to be able to render intelligible" (Fricker; 2007, 162). The secondary harms of hermeneutical injustice, Fricker argues, concern the downstream negative consequences which result from this unintelligibility. In Wood's case, this includes, among other things, her being denied unemployment insurance as well as her increased levels of stress and anxiety.

While the case of Carmita Wood and the emergence of the concept *sexual harassment* has now become the stock example of hermeneutical injustice in the literature, it's important to recognize that this injustice, as it's understood on a lacuna-centered model, can be illustrated using many other examples. Consider the recent emergence of the concept *genderqueer* as a hermeneutical resource for understanding and giving recognition to the identities of nonbinary people. Dembroff (2020) argues that:

> . . . without the resources for understanding nonbinary gender identities, we sustain a *conceptual lacuna* surrounding nonbinary persons. This lacuna does not only reflect a gap in philosophical understanding: it contributes to a hermeneutical injustice that arises from the failure to spread and charitably analyze the

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[5]Fricker draws from Brownmiller (1990), a memoir of the Women's Liberation Movement in the 1960s, when discussing the case of Carmita Wood. For other early uses of the concept *sexual harassment* see Rowe (1974) and Nemy (1975).

concepts and practices underlying nonbinary classifications. (2020, 2, italics added.)

Another example is the concept of *disability pride* as it emerged in the disability rights movement in the 1960s. Barnes (2016) discusses the importance of this concept in challenging dominant associations of disability with tragedy, inferiority, and shame. Barnes says:

> As disabled people, we are forever being told that there is something about our bodies that is lacking, that is less than. Disability pride says it doesn't have to be that way. Disability pride says that we may have minority bodies, but we don't have—we refuse to have—tragic bodies. (2016, 186)

For disabled and non-disabled people alike, Barnes argues that the concept of *disability pride* has helped to make it intelligible that disability can be the subject of genuine pride and celebration.

Recent scholarship has also highlighted significant limitations of Fricker's analysis and has further expanded upon it. Pohlhaus (2014) has developed the valuable notion of *willful hermeneutical ignorance*, which occurs when dominantly situated individuals refuse to adopt the hermeneutical resources of marginalized groups. Willful hermeneutical ignorance functions to maintain hermeneutical gaps at the *inter*-communal level—that is, while such resources may be utilized, even widely and frequently, among members of one's own community or social group (i.e. they are *intra*-communally available), lacunae nevertheless persist at the level of the dominant or collective hermeneutical repertoire that is used to interpret and communicate one's experiences across social groups more broadly.[6]

Building upon the work of Pohlhaus (2014) and others, Dotson (2012) has developed an analysis of *contributory injustice*. This is an epistemic injustice resulting from willful hermeneutical ignorance that occurs when dominantly situated individuals choose to employ prejudiced hermeneutical resources, when they could have used more accurate resources which have already been developed by those in marginalized communities. Contributory injustice concerns the refusal among those in dominant positions to allow marginalized individuals to exercise their epistemic agency by contributing to the dominant hermeneutical repertoire. As a result, hermeneutical gaps persist within the dominant (or *inter*-communal) hermeneutical inventory.

Similarly, Anderson (2017) has discusses how hermeneutical gaps may be actively cultivated through the suppression of extant hermeneutical resources. Anderson gives the

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[6]Criticisms of Fricker (2007) have pointed out a failure to distinguish between intra and inter-communal dissemination of hermeneutical resources. See, for example, Mason (2011); Medina (2012, 2017). It is worth noting that even the inter/intra communal dissemination distinction is fairly idealized. The boundaries here are certainly not as crisp as this distinction might suggest. For a related discussion see Atkins (2018) who distinguishes between resistant understanding and dominant or collective understanding.

example of post-racial movements aimed at eradicating and "moving beyond race." Attempts to promote color-blind politics, he argues, function to erase the concept *race* and the indispensable role it has in understanding the experiences of people of color (2017, 145-146). Anderson thus enriches the lacuna-centered approach to hermeneutical injustice by illustrating how some lacunae are actively procured by the removal of available hermeneutical resources.

A common thread that unites these otherwise distinct analyses is an adherence to a lacunae-centered framework for theorizing about hermeneutical injustice. While Anderson highlights a different way for hermeneutical gaps to emerge, lacunae feature prominently on his analysis. And while Dotson and Pohlhaus articulate how needed hermeneutical resources may be available and utilized within marginalized communities, they highlight how lacunae may persist more broadly, within the stock of dominant or collective conceptual resources used to communicate across social groups. Hence, here too we find a similar background assumption, namely, *The Lacuna Requirement.*

A lacuna-centered approach has also influenced prominent conceptions of hermeneutical *justice*. Fricker discusses the overcoming of hermeneutical injustice in the case of Wendy Stanford, a woman who suffered from postnatal depression after the birth of her child in the 1960s, prior to the emergence of the concept *postnatal depression*. She describes Stanford's experience during a consciousness raising session as follows.

> Wendy Sanford's moment of truth seems to be not simply a hermeneutical breakthrough for her and for the other women present, but also a moment in which some kind of *epistemic injustice is overcome*...If we can substantiate this intuition, then we shall see that the area of hermeneutical gloom with which she had lived *up until that life-changing forty-five minutes* constituted a wrong done to her in her capacity as a knower, and was thus a specific sort of epistemic injustice—a hermeneutical injustice. (2007, 149, italics added.)

Influenced by a lacuna-centered model, a great importance is often placed upon the initial naming and subsequent intelligibility that hermeneutical resources help to facilitate.[7] If hermeneutical injustice results from lacunae, the thought goes, then hermeneutical justice calls for hermeneutical "plugs", concepts which serve to fill in the gaps.

To summarize: a lacuna-centered framework proposes that hermeneutical injustice stems from one's inability to make a significant social experience intelligible (to oneself or to others) owing to a gap in the stock of hermeneutical resources, where this gap is a result of hermeneutical marginalization. According to this approach, hermeneutical injustice is perpetuated by the persistence and/or cultivation of hermeneutical lacunae—had such lacunae been filled (intra and inter-communally), hermeneutical injustice would be overcome.

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[7]Cf. (McKinnon; 2016, 441) and (Davis; 2018, 720).

Although a lacuna-centered framework has been widely adopted and endorsed across much of the recent literature, I will now argue that it's incomplete and that a more expansive approach is needed. The lacuna-centered model is overly narrow and, as a result, it fails to capture an important species of hermeneutical injustice that doesn't arise from a hermeneutical gap.

3 The Productive Power of Hermeneutical Resources

In order to motivate a more expansive framework, and in order to explain a species of hermeneutical injustice without lacunae, it is important to first recognize the productive function and power of hermeneutical resources. This idea is prominent in the pioneering work of Collins (1986, 1990), in particular, her notion of a *controlling image*.[8]

According to Collins, controlling images function to distort social reality by perpetuating oppressive stereotypes and by fueling the normalization of unjust social arrangements. Collins says:

> [C]ontrolling images are designed to make racism, sexism, poverty, and other forms of social injustice appear to be natural, normal, and inevitable parts of everyday life. (1990, 76-77)

Collins analyzes a number of controlling images that have been used to distort the experiences of Black women, thereby contributing to their oppression. These include concepts such as *the welfare queen*, *matriarch*, *jezebel*, and *mammy*. Collins discusses the *mammy* controlling image as follows.

> [T]he faithful, obedient domestic servant. *Created to justify* the economic exploitation of house slaves and sustained to explain Black women's long-standing restriction to domestic service, the mammy image represents *the normative yardstick* used to evaluate all Black women's behaviour. By loving, nurturing, and caring for her White "family" better than her own, the mammy symbolized the dominant group's perceptions of the ideal Black female relationship to elite White male power. Even though she may be well loved and may wield considerable authority in her White "family," the mammy still knows her "place" as an obedient servant. (1990, 80, italics added).

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[8]In developing her analysis of controlling images, Collins (1986) cites the work of King (1973) and Gilkes (1981). Collins says that:

> King suggests that stereotypes represent externally-defined, controlling images of Afro-American womanhood that have been *central to the dehumanization of Black women and the exploitation of Black women's labor*. Gilkes points out that Black women's assertiveness in resisting the multifaceted oppression they experience has been a consistent threat to the status quo. As punishment, Black women have been assaulted with a variety of *externally-defined negative images designed to control* assertive Black female behavior. The value of King's and Gilkes' analyses lies in their emphasis on the function of stereotypes in controlling dominated groups. (1986, 17, italics added.)

The controlling image of the mammy functions to limit Black women's participation in the hermeneutical practices of influential meaning making by relegating them to domestic household roles.[9] The mammy controlling image supports the construction and normalization of Black women as complacent domestic workers, and functions to place them into submissive roles with expectant behaviours. Crucially, Collins argues that controlling images function as "normative yardsticks"—they help to set the terms for what counts as an appropriate allocation of praise or blame. Accordingly, Black women who transgress and seek work outside of the domestic roles associated with the mammy image are prone to be interpreted as violating the prescriptions and roles imposed upon them via this social categorization.

The productive potential of hermeneutical resources is also prominent in Tirrell's (2012) work on epithets. Tirrell examines the use of "inyenzi" (cockroach) and "inzoka" (snake) by Hutu soldiers to describe Tutsis during the Rwandan genocide. She describes these epithets as exhibiting the following key features: they mark insider/outsider relations, they attribute negative properties to their target (which are presumed to be essential to them), they are embedded in social networks of subordination and oppression, they set boundaries for what constitutes permissible behaviour towards the target, and they are action-engendering insofar as they facilitate and purport to justify non-linguistic behaviours. The widespread use of these epithets, Tirrell argues, contributed greatly to dehumanization of Tutsis and the legitimization of horrific acts of violence against them (2012, 192-193).[10]

Prevailing analyses of hermeneutical injustice have understood the function and value of hermeneutical resources as primarily *interpretive*: hermeneutical resources facilitate the intelligibility of socially significant experiences. However, hermeneutical resources can do so much more than render social experiences intelligible. They often serve crucial productive functions as well: they organize members of society and cast them into certain roles and relations with expectant behaviours. Collins' discussion of controlling images and Tirrell's work on epithets help to reveal an overly narrow focus across much of the literature on hermeneutical injustice by highlighting the productive dimensions of conceptual resources.

In addition to the value of intelligibility we ought to also recognize the productive function of hermeneutical resources, namely, the significant value and potential they have in helping to support the equitable coordination and organization of members of society.[11] Thus, an analysis of hermeneutical injustice must acknowledge that some concepts have

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[9]Note: as was mentioned previously, this does not necessarily mean that Black women are unable to develop and use hermeneutic resources *intra*-communally.

[10]We can also compare similar influential rhetoric during WWII that described Jewish people as "vermin." For further discussions on the productive function of pernicious social concepts see, for example, Young (1990) on cultural imperialism, Swanson (Forth) and Kukla (2018) on the relationship between slurs and ideology, and Neufeld (2019) on slurs and essentialization.

[11]Cf. (Haslanger; 2020, 14-15).

serious productive power—that they can serve to sustain, normalize, and justify oppressive social practices and unjust social arrangements. Once the productive function of hermeneutical resources is salient, this opens the door to theorizing about hermeneutical injustice in a more comprehensive and more deeply social way; it draws our attention to the complex relationship between hermeneutical resources and the broader social and political environments in which they are embedded and implemented.

A lacuna-centred approach toward hermeneutical injustice fails to appreciate the potential for hermeneutical injustice to manifest not just from a dearth in conceptual resources, but also from the way in which concepts interact with each other given pervasive cultural assumptions and social conventions. In other words, it is not just that we need to fill in hermeneutical gaps, but we also need to consider how newly introduced concepts are operationalized and how they cohere (or fail to cohere) with other extant concepts when situated within a social milieu.

Hermeneutical resources are not introduced to collective understanding in a vacuum, but against the backdrop of longstanding and often deeply rooted conceptual schemes that too often include distorting concepts and oppressive controlling images. Zooming out and taking a broader perspective on hermeneutical injustice, namely, a perspective which acknowledges the interpretive as well as the productive value of hermeneutical resources, is vital not only to understand the myriad ways in which hermeneutical injustice can manifest, but also to gain a deeper understanding of what hermeneutical justice demands.

4   Hermeneutical Clash, Defeat, and Preemption

Consider the following case of what we might call a *hermeneutical clash*. First, consider the concept *golden boy*. What—or who—comes to mind? Most likely the following: this person is probably white, cis, heterosexual, non-disabled, hyper privileged, athletic, popular, educated (perhaps at an elite institution), some might describe him as "all-American", and so on. Next, consider the concept *rapist*. This concept has been operative in collective understanding for decades. In mainstream media, rapists are typically construed as creeps, loners, strangers, deviants, monsters, or savage animals (Gray; 2016; Murphy; 2017; O'Hara; 2012; Schwark; 2017).[12]

Now ask yourself: what happens when the so-called "golden boy"—in all his glory and esteem—is accused of rape? That is, what happens when we attempt to apply the concept *rapist* to someone who seamlessly fits the profile of a golden boy? This is precisely what happened in the case of Brock Turner, a former student-athlete at Stanford University who

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[12]It is also important to note that "monstrosity" and "animality" are also deeply racialized notions in a United States context, associated primarily with Black people and people of color. Consider, for example, the rhetoric surrounding the 1989 "Central Park Five" case where five Black teenagers were wrongfully accused of raping a white woman who was jogging in Central Park. These boys were described as a "wolf pack", "animals", "blood thirsty", "savages", and "wilding" (Hinton; 2019).

was discovered raping an unconscious woman, who we now know to be Chanel Miller, behind a dumpster.[13] Turner is your quintessential golden boy. This is more than apparent in his father's letter to Judge Persky, the judge who presided over his case. In the letter, Turner's father writes that:

> Brock has an inner strength and fortitude that is beyond anything I have ever seen. This was no doubt honed over the many years of competitive swimming...Brock has always been an extremely dedicated person whether it was academics, sports, or developing and maintaining friendships and relationships...Brock was equally talented in athletics participating in baseball, basketball, and swimming.[14]

The majority of the letter discusses Turner's athletic and academic achievements. But, one might ask, why in the world would this ever be relevant to Turner's acquittal? Here's why. Turner's father is attempting to probe a distorting image of Brock as a *golden boy*: the kind of kid who could do no wrong and, hence, who clearly couldn't be guilty of the felony sexual assault charges against him. Furthermore, in this case the golden boy image is contrasted with the distorting, yet all too common, portrayal of a rapists as creepy strangers, loners, monsters, or animals.

In another letter to Judge Persky, Turner's childhood friend, Leslie Rasmussen, writes that: "Brock is not a monster. He's the furthest thing from anything like that" (Paiella; 2016). Judge Persky seems to have sympathized. He sentenced Turner to a mere six months in jail, out of a possible fourteen. Turner was released on probation after serving just three months.

This is not a one-off case. In 2017, a sixteen-year-old boy was charged with raping a heavily intoxicated girl who had been noticeably slurring her words. The boy had filmed himself having sex with her and afterwards sent the video to his friends along with a text which read: "When your first time having sex is rape" (Ferr-Sadurní; 2019). Judge Troiano denied the prosecutor's motion to have the boy tried as an adult. He had justified this decision by citing the fact that the boy "comes from a good family," that he is "clearly a candidate for not just college but probably for a good college," and that he was an Eagle Scout—the highest rank achievable in the Boy Scouts of America (Mosbergen; 2019). As before, the golden boy image directly clashes with the stereotypical image of a rapist as a deviant and debased monster, stranger, creep, or loner.

Manne (2017) discusses the common inference pattern made in such cases as follows (198).

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[13]At the time of the trial, the victim's name was kept anonymous and listed under "Emily Doe". However, Chanel Miller has recently shared her story with the broader public in a memoir: *Know My Name* (2019).

[14]This letter was last accessed here: https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/2852615- Stanford-Victim-Letter-Impact-Statement-From.html

1. Golden boys are not rapists.

2. So-and-so is a golden boy.

3. Therefore, so-and-so is not a rapist.

Similarly:

1. Rapists are monsters.

2. So-and-so is not a monster.

3. Therefore, so-and-so is not a rapist.

Manne argues that exonerating narratives, such as the "golden boy" narrative, function to excessively inflate the credibility of men who commit violent misogynistic acts against women, and thereby deflates the credibility of women who speak out against them. In cases of 'he said/she said' testimony there is only a fixed amount of credibility to go around, and believing him, directly discredits her as either lying or confused (and vice versa).[15]

In her recent memoir, Chanel Miller, the survivor from the Turner case, describes how the media commonly depicted Turner as having been "misconstrued as a criminal." She discusses how even well after his conviction many refused to admit the fact that Turner had sexually assaulted her. She says:

> The stories about Brock running from police with a backpack full of Coors, rub-bing up on girls, smoking weed, tripping on acid, photographing tits, were all absent from the image his loved ones and the media projected. *The Washington Post* called him *squeaky clean* and *baby-faced*, a rosy-cheeked cherub. The letter writers insisted he was misconstrued as a criminal. They called him *an inno-cent man, fighting for his freedom…Gracious, caring, talented. Humble, responsible, trustworthy. Wouldn't hurt a fly.* Even after the conviction, they believed he re-mained entitled to impunity. Their support was unwavering, they refused to call it assault, only called it *the horrible mess, this unfortunate situation.* (Miller; 2019, 463)[16]

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[15]Cf. (Manne; 2020, 194). Manne's discussion of the Brock Turner case engages primarily with (Fricker; 2007) on testimonial injustice, a kind of epistemic injustice wherein a speaker's testimony fails to gain uptake owing to an identity prejudice against the testifier. It's noteworthy that Fricker (2007) focuses primarily upon credibility *deficits* when developing her analysis of testimonial injustice (i.e. giving too little credit to a testifier due to an identity prejudice). However, recent scholarship has persuasively argued that creditably *surpluses* (i.e. giving an excess of credit to a speaker) can also perpetuate forms of testimonial injustice. See Medina (2012); Davis (2016); Yap (2017); Lackey (2018, 2020) for further discussion.

[16]Parts of this passage are quoted and discussed in (Manne; 2020, 38). See Manne (2020), Ch. 3, for an insightful further discussion of this case.

The hermeneutical clash between the concept *rapist* and the concept *golden boy* is also reflected in the seemingly paradoxical statements in a letter from Leslie Rasmussen, Turner's friend.

> [R]ape on campuses isn't always because people are rapists... This is completely different from a woman getting kidnapped and raped as she is walking to her car in a parking lot. That is a rapist. These are not rapists. These are idiot boys and girls having too much to drink and not being aware of their surroundings and having clouded judgement (Paiella; 2016).

When privileged men (typically, cis, white, heterosexual, upper class, etc.) commit acts of violence against women, there is a persistent tendency to explain away their behaviour as an aberration or deviation from their "normal" or "true" character. Turner might have done this (a rape), but he isn't a *rapist*.[17]

Reflecting upon these cases uncovers an important, yet under-theorized, species of hermeneutical injustice. The case of Carmita Wood is strikingly different from the case of Chanel Miller. In the former case, the concept *sexual harassment* was wholly absent from the collective hermeneutical repertoire—it wasn't available for use within social, political, or legal settings in general. But, in the latter case, the concept *rapist* was widely available and, importantly, was present within legal settings.

However, there is a crucial difference between a concept being sufficiently acquired and broadly disseminated such that it occupies a place in the collective stock of hermeneutical resources, and its actually being effectively *operationalized* such that it is accurately applied, especially in high-stakes cases. For example, the concept *rapist* being readily applied to actual perpetrators of rape in a legal setting, especially in the face of overwhelming evidence.

While a needed concept might exist in the hermeneutical inventory at large (as the concept *rapist* did in the previous example), in particular social contexts a concept's application might be severely constrained. Such cases call our attention to the complex ways in which concepts are integrated into extant conceptual frameworks and the dynamic relationship between hermeneutical resources and the broader social milieu in which they are embedded. The introduction and sheer presence of a concept within the dominant hermeneutical repertoire, and more specifically, one's being conceptually competent with some concept, is not enough to ensure that the concept will be accurately deployed in socially significant contexts.

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[17]Another telling example concerns how Muslim men who commit violent acts against civilians are routinely labelled terrorists across United States media channels. But, when non-Muslim white men commit nearly identical acts their behaviour is routinely attributed to non-essential features of their psychology (e.g., mental illness) or exogenous features of their environment (e.g., poor childhood upbringing or a bad neighbourhood). White terrorists are typically interpreted as hapless victims of circumstance and as not acting in accordance with their "real" selves. Across many cases, in a North American context, being a white man can, and often does, undermine one's classification as a terrorist—even when one has committed blatant terrorist acts. See Kunst et al. (2018) for further discussion. This relates to what psychologists have called the "Fundamental Attribution Error." For further discussion see, for example, Leslie (2017) on generics and essentialization.

There is thus a need to sharply distinguish between the initial *processing* or *acquisition* conditions of a hermeneutical resource, on the one hand, and its proper *application* conditions, on the other. When a concept is initially grasped, one thereby becomes (more or less) conceptually competent with the concept. However, conceptual competence does not always, and more often does not, translate into a perfect ability to identify all instances where the concept accurately applies.

Consider the following toy example. One might be competent with the concept *fruit* yet fail to accurately identify an avocado as a fruit. Common associations of fruit with sweetness and avocados with savoury cooking may hinder one's ability to properly classify an avocado as a fruit. Yet, it's clear that one can still retain their conceptual competence, even to a very high degree, despite failing to accurately apply the concept in all cases. We could imagine someone saying: *"Of course I know what fruit is. I just didn't know that was a fruit."* If conceptual competence demands the ability to accurately apply a concept in each and every instance, then there would be very few concepts with which one was genuinely competent.[18]

Balkin (1990) discusses how certain concepts, while falling short of being outright logically contradictory, can nonetheless be rendered opposites when embedded into certain social contexts; he calls such cases *nested oppositions* and gives the following examples.

> If we say that red and green are opposite colors in a traffic light, we are not saying that they logically contradict each other. Rather, they are opposed with respect to the meanings these colors are given in traffic signals. The context of conventions concerning traffic signals makes them opposites. In another context, they may be seen as similar to each other. For example, red and green are both colors of the natural spectrum, or colors associated with Christmas, while lavender and brown are not. Thus red and green are seen as different in some contexts, and are seen as having similar properties in others. (1990, 6-7)

We can apply Balkin's insights to cases of hermeneutical injustice without lacunae. For example, in a social milieu where patriarchal ideology and its attendant conventions and social practise, along with other overlapping systems of oppression, are prevalent, the *golden boy* concept is prone to be interpreted as clashing or as in opposition to the *bad boy*,

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[18]Cf. Haslanger (2020b) who draws upon Yalcin (2016), when defending the view that the content of a concept is a partition of logical space. To possess a concept, in her view, is to have a disposition which responds to that partition in certain ways. However, one's ability to attend to the partition correctly (i.e. to separate the X's from the non-X's) may vary depending upon a number of factors. So, conceptual competence does not entail that one can apply the concept accurately across cases. Haslanger gives the following illustrative case.

> For example, we may have the same concept of *cat* – the informational content of the concept cat is the same for each of us – but our possession of it occurs in somewhat different ways so that certain inferences are more direct for me than they are for you, or that I am more ready to apply the concept than you. Or it may be that because you know more about cats, you have a sensitivity to different kinds of cat, so your partition of logical space is more fine-grained. (240)

or *the scoundrel*. And, furthermore, in such social settings rapists are readily characterized as creepy strangers, recluse outsiders, deviant monsters, or savage animals. Accordingly, those who fit the profile of a golden boy are commonly taken to be the kind of person who could do no wrong, for the very meaning—what it is to be a golden boy in this social context—precludes this. It's creepy strangers and deviant monsters who rape women; golden boys are "good guys"; they're in the Eagle Scouts and are awarded swimming scholarships. When embedded into such social environments, the concepts *golden boy* and *rapist* are construed as opposites or as clashing.

A hermeneutical resource can be collectively available yet fail to get applied in socially significant contexts where it matters the most. Other distorting concepts may defeat or pre-empt the application of an available and more accurate concept.[19]

To develop this idea further, let's return to the Turner case. Because the concept *golden boy* readily applied to Turner, this functioned for some as a strong defeater for, or may have altogether pre-empted, his classification as a rapist. This is partly due to the fact that the *golden boy* concept is distorting. It purports to justify and supports the legitimization of oppressive social practices, namely, practices which sustain and reinforce elite white male dominance by portraying such men as incapable wrongdoing, and hence, as incapable of rape.[20] Couple this with the misguided, yet all too common, depiction of rapists as strangers, creeps, savage animals, and unhinged monsters, and you get the perfect hermeneutical storm: golden boys simply couldn't be rapists. Hence, even if one was (more or less) conceptually competent with the concept *rapist*, one may still fail to identify actual rapists as such in particular instances owing to hermeneutical defeat or pre-emption.

Thus, we need to be attentive to not only the initial conceptual dissemination and acquisition of a hermeneutical resource, but also the broader social environments in which a concept is operationalized and implemented. We need to consider how hermeneutical resources interact with each other when embedded into certain social contexts with entrenched social conventions and background ideologies (e.g., sexism, racism, classism, xenophobia, ableism, transphobia, heteronormativity, capitalism, and so on), especially when such background social environments are partly constituted and reinforced by the widespread use of oppressive distorting concepts and controlling images.

In a social context where distorting images like the *golden boy* are widespread and re-inforced by dominant narratives and social scripts, it becomes increasingly hard to mean-

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[19]Cf. Begby's 2020 analysis of evidential pre-emption in the context of testimonial exchange, especially what he calls "epistemic grooming."

[20]Maitra (2018) outlines different ways in which concepts might be distorting using the concepts *statutory rape* and *sexual harassment* as case studies. I hope to remain neutral on the ways in which concepts might be distorting; I believe that the phenomena in question are diverse and complex. Offering a taxonomy of the various ways in which concepts distort social reality is beyond the scope of this paper, however, Maitra's work is helpful in outlining two potential ways this happens: through eliciting inappropriate inferences or eliciting inappropriate analogies. Also see Jenkins (2017) for a related discussion of the relationship between rape myths and hermeneutical injustice. Jenkins considers cases where a victim of rape is unable to understand her experience *as* rape owning to operative and distorting rape myths.

ingfully apply the concept *rapist* to individuals, like Turner, who fit the mold of a golden boy. So, while the needed concept may exist in the dominant hermeneutical inventory, it is prone to unwarranted defeat and pre-emption.

What's more, those who attempt to apply this concept to individual like Turner, as Miller did, are far less likely to be believed, and thus are less able to share their crucially important knowledge with important others. This, in turn, will limit the concept's productive function and influence in society—the concept is unable to robustly latch on to the social world in a way that can stimulate and support social and political progress.

Contrary the lacuna-centered framework, filling in hermeneutical gaps and garnering collective conceptual competence, while undeniably important, is not enough to overcome hermeneutical injustice. Conceptual competence does not ensure the accurate application of a concept, especially in high-stakes social contexts where privileged groups stand to gain from conceptual distortion and oppressive ideological practices. The application of the needed concept may be defeated or pre-empted when pernicious background ideologies and social practices dictate that some other opposing and distorting concept is more applicable. Hence, even if the concept is available and widely used across social groups and communities, this is not enough to secure its accurate application, and crucially, not enough to reap the productive value of the concept in important social contexts.

In the next section, I begin to develop a more expansive and more socially situated framework for theorizing about hermeneutical injustice. This approach better accommodate cases of hermeneutical injustice both with and without hermeneutical gaps.

5   Positive and Negative Hermeneutical Injustice

Why do the cases described thus far capture a distinct species of hermeneutical injustice? Recall that according to Fricker the primary harm of hermeneutical injustice:

> . . . consists in a situated hermeneutical inequality: the concrete situation is such that the subject is rendered unable to make communicatively intelligible something which it is particularly in his or her interests to be able to render intelligible. (2007, 162)

We can break down Fricker's analysis more precisely as requiring the following necessary conditions. Hermeneutical injustice occurs when: (i) one's experience fails to be intelligible (either to oneself or to others), (ii) the hermeneutical tools need to make one's experience intelligible are not collective shared by those in the relevant social context, and (iii) this is due to a lacuna in the collective hermeneutical repertoire resulting from one's hermeneutical marginalization.

Consider the perspective of Chanel Miller, the survivor in the Turner case. Miller was clearly in a position to render her experience intelligible—she wasn't hindered in her ability

to understand that she was a victim of rape. This was unmistakably and painfully obvious to her. Others, however, were reluctant, or altogether failed, to apply the concept rapist to Turner. This, of course, is not to say that such individuals lacked the concept rapist; this concept was available and intelligible to them. Instead, others failed to accurately apply this concept to Turner because he exemplified many of the hallmarks of a "golden boy". So, while others could render intelligible the fact that Miller and her defence team were accusing Turner of rape, they failed to apply the concept *rapist* to Turner due to the presence of distorting and oppressive concepts.

Let's return to the three conditions needed to establish a hermeneutical injustice on the lacuna-centered analysis. Given that the concept *rapist* was intelligible to Miller and those in the relevant social context, and moreover, given that the concept *rapist* was broadly available in the hermeneutical repertoire at large (there was no lacuna), this case does not satisfy any of the three conditions. So, according to the lacuna-centred framework, it follows that Miller isn't a victim of hermeneutical injustice. Is this the right result? It would be a serious mistake, I think, to draw this conclusion. Instead, cases like these highlight a need to revise and expand upon the analysis of hermeneutical injustice and the range of harms that it may give rise to.

Defenders of a lacuna-centered framework are right to note that across a range of cases the primary harm of hermeneutical injustice concerns an inability to make an important social experience intelligible (either to oneself or to others). However, this is not the sole way in which hermeneutical injustice can manifest. The hermeneutical injustice that Miller faced didn't involve a lack of intelligibly, but instead resulted from a failure of conceptual application or conceptual aptness. Others were reluctant to apply the concept rapist to Turner because they didn't view this concept as fitting or appropriate for a man like him. Furthermore, this failure of application doesn't trace back to any hermeneutical gap. It's the very opposite: it was due to the *positive presence* of distorting and oppressive concepts which served to prop up Turner's innocence and to prevent the concept rapist from applying to him.

Taken in this way, we can explain Miller as having suffered a hermeneutical injustice, not due to a lack of intelligibility, but due to the fact that others in her social context were unable to accurately apply the concept rapist to Turner owing to the presence of oppressive concepts. This, in turn, resulted in the denial of Miller's credibility and thus diminished her status as a knower, specifically as a contributor of important knowledge in the given social environment.

Reflecting upon these features of Miller's situation suggests a more expansive framework for theorizing about hermeneutical injustice. This framework encompasses the explanatory successes of the lacuna-centered analysis, while also capturing an important species of hermeneutical injustice which doesn't result from lacunae or failures of intel-

ligibility. According to this broader approach, hermeneutical injustice can manifest in at least two distinct ways, what we might call *positive* hermeneutical injustice and *negative* hermeneutical injustice.

Negative hermeneutical injustice is the more familiar kind of injustice that is captured by the lacuna-centred account. It's negative because at its core it results from a lack of hermeneutical resources. A paradigm example being the much-discussed case of Carmita Wood and the absence of the concept *sexual harassment*. In cases of negative hermeneutical injustice, the primary harm consists in an inability to render important social experiences intelligible (either to oneself or to others).[21]

On the other hand, *positive* hermeneutical injustice results from the presence of oppressive and distorting concepts which crowd out, defeat, or pre-empt the application of an available and more accurate concept. Positive hermeneutical injustice is the kind of injustice exhibited in Chanel Miller's case and the failure to apply the concept *rapist* to Turner, given that he fits the profile of a golden boy. Due to the hermeneutical marginalization of certain groups—specifically, the unequal authority and power concerning not just the initial creation and dissemination of conceptual resources, but also their revision, reinforcement, and overall influence and applicability in high-stakes social contexts, oppressive concepts remain operative within one's social milieu. In cases of positive hermeneutical injustice, the primary harm concerns a failure of conceptual aptness or applicability which results from oppressive concepts limiting or altogether blocking the accurate application of a concept.

It is important to emphasize the epistemic dimensions of positive hermeneutical injustice. This injustice is epistemic insofar as it involves an unwarranted infringement and limitation upon one's capacity to contribute knowledge in a socially significant context. In Miller's case, the presence of distorting and oppressive concepts functioned to significantly undermine her credibility and thus her capacity to contribute knowledge with respect to a crucially important subject matter. While everyone could understand her accusation against Turner, many nonetheless failed to gain knowledge as a result of her testimony. Distorting and oppressive concepts functioned as defeaters, or altogether pre-empted, the uptake of her testimony and undercut her attempt to classify Turner as a rapist.

This broader framework for theorizing about hermeneutical injustice gives rise to a host of new and interesting questions concerning the relationship between hermeneutical and testimonial injustice. Fricker discusses the connection between (negative) hermeneutical

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[21]It is important to note that in some cases of negative hermeneutical injustice, the presence of negative controlling images might very well serve to sustain and reinforce hermeneutical lacunae. In classifying this species of hermeneutical injustice as negative I don't want to in any way to rule out this possibility. Cf. Dotson (2012) for a related discussion of contributory injustice. These two categories—negative and positive—are somewhat idealized, and in practice the lines between them might be fuzzy and imprecise. Moreover, once we consider the broader relationship and interaction among hermeneutical resources within a social context, we might find cases that involve combinations of both positive and negative forms of hermeneutical injustice. I don't mean to rule out this potential either. Teasing apart the details here is an important project that merits further careful investigation.

injustice and testimonial injustice on the lacuna-centered model as follows:

> ...testimonial injustice becomes not simply likely but almost inescapable when the persistence of hermeneutical gaps renders certain voices less intelligible (and hence less creditable) than other on certain matters, and their attempts to articulate certain meanings are systematically regarded as nonsensical (and hence incredible). (Fricker; 2007, 159)

Relatedly, we can begin to understand how positive hermeneutical injustice impinges upon the credibility of testifiers. When speakers offer testimony which is incongruous with the oppressive concepts operative within their social milieu, their testimony is more easily prone to defeat and pre-emption. As a result, one's testimony is less likely to gain uptake and to be believed.

It is also important to acknowledge a further series of secondary and more practical harms that Miller confronted as a result of positive hermeneutical injustice. We can understand the failure to apply the concept rapist to Turner as symptomatic of an overall failure of operationalization—a failure to effectively integrate a hermeneutical resource into a broader social milieu owing, in part, to the presence of oppressive concepts in the dominant hermeneutical repertoire. As a result, the productive function and value of this concept—its potential to support meaningful social and political change—is significantly diminished across a range of important socio-political contexts, as is evidenced by the lenient jail sentence given to Turner.

Once a concept is introduced into collective understanding, this will facilitate intelligibility in the form of conceptual competence (i.e. a lacuna no longer persists), but, as I've argued, this does not guarantee that the concept will actually be used and applied in important and socially significant scenarios. In particular, it does not guarantee that the needed concept is immune from unwarranted defeated or pre-emption by an oppressive controlling image or distorting concept which is operative in one's social milieu. Overcoming negative forms of hermeneutical injustice—by filling in hermeneutical lacunae—does not entail that positive forms of hermeneutical injustice will be overcome as well.

Hermeneutical injustice isn't overcome unless and until hermeneutical resources which accurately depict social reality gain an influential and authoritative grip on the social world—a grip which positively influences and improves the lives of those in marginalized communities. Only then can hermeneutical resources support meaningful change and help to reform our social and political landscapes for the better. The sheer existence of a concept, even if it has been disseminated both intra and inter communally, while vitally important, is not enough to ensure this.

Theorizing about hermeneutical injustice using this more expansive framework helps us to reveal significant limits of a lacunae-centered model by illustrating how hermeneutical injustice may persist well after lacunae are filled. An expansive framework also sup-

ports a characterization of hermeneutical injustice as an appropriately social phenomenon by highlighting the overarching social environments in which hermeneutical resources are embedded and implemented. A more expansive framework—one that recognizes both positive and negative species of hermeneutical injustice—is more complete to the extent that it acknowledges the aptness or applicability of socially significant concepts and how they are operationalized within a given social milieu.

This expansive framework also has important connections to Pohlhaus's (2014) analysis of willful hermeneutical ignorance, as well as Dotson's (2012) account of contributory injustice. Recall that willful hermeneutical ignorance occurs when dominantly situated knowers refuse to acquire the hermeneutical tools of those from marginalized groups, and, as a result, hermeneutical lacunae are sustained at the level of the dominant (or inter-communal) hermeneutical repertoire. On a more expansive approach, we can begin to describe a phenomenon adjacent to willful hermeneutical ignorance.

Even after a concept is collectively available, that is, even after the dominantly situated have acquired the concepts needed to make the experiences of marginalized members of society intelligible, they may still willfully refuse to adopt the proper application conditions for such concepts.This will directly impact the overall productive function and value of these concepts within one's social milieu. In such cases, those in dominant positions may acknowledge, acquire, and even widely utilize a concept—yet they may not apply the concept in a particular situations due to their continued use of controlling images and oppressive distorting concepts.

Similarly, recall Dotson's account of contributory injustice which occurs when, because of willful hermeneutical ignorance, the dominantly situated refuse to adopt the hermeneutical resources of those from marginalized groups and instead use other, often prejudiced, resources instead. When this happens, the epistemic agency of marginalized individuals is frustrated and undermined; they are unable to positively contribute to the dominant hermeneutical repertoire. In light of the more expansive framework, we can begin to explain a related way in which the epistemic agency of marginalized groups may be compromised. This happens when the dominantly situated fail to properly apply and utilize a socially significant concept accurately and for its intended productive purposes.

Systematic failures of conceptual application, particularly when this is the result of endorsing and maintaining the use of oppressive concepts or controlling images, can serve to undermine the epistemic agency of marginalized individuals insofar as it limits their capacity to influence how hermeneutical resources are implemented and utilized within a social milieu. When this happens, marginalized individuals are unjustly undermined in their ability to contribute hermeneutical resources with robust productive value and influence, that is, resources which are able to positively support social and political change.

Oftentimes, when disadvantaged communities develop hermeneutical resources, they

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do so not only because they are valuable interpretive tools needed to understand and communicate their experiences, but also because they are vital productive resources. The hope is that these hermeneutical resources will be accurately and effectively utilized such that they improve the lives of individuals within these communities (e.g., to help survivors of sexual violence). However, if members of society continue to engage in oppressive social practices, specifically, those which make use of and reinforce the influence of oppressive controlling images and distorting concepts, then these hermeneutical contributions will be significantly diminished.

What might it take to overcome hermeneutical injustice? A more expansive framework suggests that hermeneutical justice requires much more than filling in hermeneutical lacunae. Combating hermeneutical injustice demands collective social movements aimed at disrupting and reforming dominant conceptual frameworks and social scripts. Hence, it's not only important to develop and widely disseminate novel concepts needed to understand socially significant experiences. But equally (if not more) important is unlearning and dislodging the distorting ideological grip of controlling images and oppressive distorting concepts that are operative within one's social milieu.

This is unlikely to be effective if done piecemeal, individual by individual, concept by concept. Instead, hermeneutical justice is more likely achieved with collective social action—movements which center the voices and experiences of marginalized individuals and which aim to disrupt and expose systemic patters of oppression and exploitation. We can look to the gay rights movement and the fight for marriage equality in North America as an illustrative example. The concept *marriage* is now (to a great extent) routinely applied to gay couples in social and legal context. This movement helped to support the intelligibility of gay marriage, but additionally, it enabled gay couples to enjoy benefits and privileges afforded by legal unions (e.g., health insurance, benefits, immigration and residency benefits, and social security programs). Having *marriage* readily apply to gay couples was productively powerful—it helped to improve the material conditions of many gay couples across North America.[22]

Another illustrative example is the #BodyPositivity movement, which has gained a

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[22]Fricker (2007) acknowledges the important role of social movements and political change in challenging the conditions that give rise to hermeneutical injustice, namely, in challenging hermeneutical marginalization, but she doesn't wholly embrace this as a necessary component of combating hermeneutical injustice itself. She says:

> Shifting the unequal relations of power that create the conditions of hermeneutical injustice (namely, hermeneutical marginalization) takes more than virtuous individual conduct of any kind; *it takes group political action for social change*. The primary ethical role for the virtue of hermeneutical justice, then, remains one of mitigating the negative impact of hermeneutical injustice on the speaker. From the point of view of social change, *this may be but a drop in the ocean*; still, from the point of view of the individual hearer's virtue, not to mention the individual speaker's experience of their exchange, it is *justice enough*.(174- 175, italics added.)

However, once the productive function of hermeneutical resources is brought to the fore, We can begin to marshal persuasive reasons why individual level interventions focusing on intelligibility are unlikely to be "justice enough" when it comes to combating hermeneutical injustice.

global online following over the past decade (Baker; 2015; Crabbe; 2017; Taylor; 2018). The overarching goals of this movement is to combat mainstream narratives which promote unhealthy and downright unattainable standards of beauty and body image, primarily targeting young women and girls. By centering bodies which have historically been under-represented in mainstream media—disabled bodies, fat bodies, and bodies of color—and with artists like Cinta Tort Cartró who embraces the beauty of stretch marks by painting them vibrant colors (Park; 2017), this movement aims to problematize dominant social assumptions and narratives which deem fatness and other marginalized body features to be a cause for embarrassment, shame, or inferiority.

Combating hermeneutical injustice is thus not simply a matter of filling in hermeneutical gaps. Hermeneutical justice demands something much more radical and far reaching. More plausibly, it demands large-scale social movements aimed at dismantling oppressive ideologies and social practices. Without question, part of this will involve cultivating and propagating novel conceptual resources—e.g., concepts like *genderqueer*, *disability pride*, *body positivity*, and *sexual harassment*—that is, it will require filling in hermeneutical lacunae. But, as we've seen, much more is needed beyond this to sufficiently guard against and rectify the harms of hermeneutical injustice.

So, where does this leave us? In closing, I want to emphasize what I take to be the best way forward in theorizing about hermeneutical injustice, and epistemic injustice more broadly. The main thrust is this: we need to broaden our horizons and engage in a more *socially embedded* way.[23] Contrasting cases of positive compared to negative hermeneutical injustice serves to illustrates how concepts don't exist and operate independently from one another, but are deeply interconnected. The productive value of hermeneutical tools is both constrained and enabled by their place alongside other concepts within an overarching social milieu. Moreover, the sheer fact that many concepts were and still are needed to make sense of the socially significant experiences of marginalized communities should be incredibly suggestive of the current state of collective hermeneutical frameworks and the strong influence of unjust social practices and oppressive concepts and controlling images therein.

It is thus imperative that we pay close attention to how concepts can function to sustain and promote pernicious background ideologies and unjust social arrangements, and how this in turn can restrict the productive function and power of liberatory concepts, both old and new. The intelligibility gained from the introduction and widespread dissemination of a hermeneutical resource is undeniably important. However, this is just one dimension of hermeneutical progress that ought not distract us from others. We must also recognize the productive function and value of hermeneutical resources and how they are taken as

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[23]Cf. Anderson (2012); Dotson (2012, 2014); Haslanger (2016, 2020,b); Vasilyeva and Ayala-López (2019), among others, who emphasize the importance of thinking about whole social systems and institutional-level phenomena when theorizing about epistemic injustice.

applicable and utilized, or more importantly, *in*applicable and *not* utilized, across diverse social environments.

Successfully overcoming hermeneutical injustice likely requires collective social movements; it requires organization, mobilization, and activism. It requires challenging and disrupting the status quo narrative and dislodging ingrained assumptions and ideologies which normalize and purport to justify oppressive social arrangements. When a hermeneutical resource, which is needed to understand the experiences of disadvantaged groups, is introduced into the collective hermeneutical repertoire, this is clearly a move in the right direction; it is progress towards hermeneutical justice. However, if prevailing social conditions aren't conducive to the concept's gaining a meaningful grip on the world—that is, to its being broadly applied in important social contexts where it accurately describes social reality and where it stands to do productive work to help improve the material conditions of those in disadvantaged positions—the concept's potential to combat hermeneutical injustice will be undermined.

Contrary to what a lacuna-centered analysis suggests, filling in hermeneutical gaps is not enough to ensure hermeneutical justice; this is just one part of a much broader, comprehensive, and socially driven process.

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