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J. Y. Lee

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ARTICLE



# Anticipatory Epistemic Injustice

J. Y. Lee 

Department of Public Health, University of Copenhagen, Copenhagen, Denmark

## ABSTRACT

Epistemic injustices are wrongs that agents can suffer in their capacity as knowers. In this article, I offer a conceptualisation of a phenomenon I call *anticipatory epistemic injustice*, which I claim is a distinct and particularly pernicious type of epistemic injustice worthy of independent analysis. I take anticipatory epistemic injustice to consist in the wrongs that agents can suffer as a result of *anticipated* challenges in their process of taking up testimony-sharing opportunities. I distinguish my account from paradigmatic cases of epistemic injustice, such as Miranda Fricker's concepts of testimonial injustice and hermeneutical injustice; additionally, I differentiate my view from Kristie Dotson's account of testimonial smothering. I argue, ultimately, that anticipatory epistemic injustice is a useful addition to our current taxonomy of epistemic injustices, as it has promising explanatory potential for a range of non-standard cases of epistemic injustice.

## KEYWORDS

Epistemic injustice;  
testimonial injustice; self-silencing; testimonial smothering

## Introduction

In this article, I aim to explicate *anticipatory epistemic injustice* as a type of epistemic injustice worthy of its own label. Anticipatory epistemic injustice refers to the various wrongs that epistemic agents may suffer as a result of anticipated challenges in the process of taking up opportunities to share testimony. The effects of anticipatory epistemic injustice are primarily evident in cases where epistemic agents enact testimony-suppressing behaviour. Such behaviour might encompass the practice of withholding, diminishing, retracting, repudiating, and revising one's own testimony in response to the consequent challenges anticipated.

My motivation for identifying anticipatory epistemic injustice as a distinct phenomenon is to bring greater attention to cases of epistemic injustice which are not straightforwardly analysable under Miranda Fricker's standard account of epistemic injustice, in which *testimonial injustice* and *hermeneutical injustice* are paradigmatic. Moreover, while several features of my account of anticipatory epistemic injustice may possibly overlap primarily with other *silencing* variants of epistemic injustice, such as Kristie Dotson's *testimonial smothering*, I maintain that anticipatory epistemic injustice can also be distinguished from this variant.

I will begin my paper by with a brief overview of Miranda Fricker's account of testimonial and hermeneutical injustice, which I present as *the standard view* of epistemic injustice. In the subsequent section, I will illustrate the phenomenon of anticipatory epistemic injustice with three case studies. Thereafter, I demonstrate why these cases are not easily captured by the standard view, or even other, non-standard varieties of epistemic injustice, such as Kristie Dotson's account of testimonial smothering. Hopefully, my comparative analysis will help distinguish anticipatory epistemic injustice as a distinct type of epistemic injustice. Finally, I characterize anticipatory epistemic

injustice and elaborate on its particular perniciousness, thereby consolidating my case that it is a distinct form of epistemic injustice worthy of our philosophical attention.

## Epistemic Injustice: The Standard View

For my purposes, I will take Miranda Fricker's work on epistemic injustice as my frame of reference and presume that it outlines the 'standard view' of epistemic injustice. According to Fricker, there is a distinctively epistemic type of injustice which consists in '... a wrong done to someone specifically in their capacity as a knower' (Fricker 2007a, 1). Her monograph on epistemic injustice narrows in on two primary types of epistemic injustice, namely *testimonial* injustice and *hermeneutical* injustice.

Testimonial injustice occurs when a speaker's testimony fails to be given proper credibility due to some prejudice that the hearer has about the speaker. This type of epistemic injustice, for Fricker, is produced as a result of identity-based prejudices (i.e., stereotypes) which generate a *credibility deficit* (McKinnon 2016, 439). When this occurs, the epistemic agent fails to be 'counted as a source of knowledge' (Langton 2010, 460).

Hermeneutical injustice occurs when an agent is unfairly disadvantaged with respect to accessing 'interpretive resources' (Fricker 2007a, 1) for making sense of their social experiences. It is when one 'can't find the words, or even thoughts, to express what [one is] groping for, because there is a lacuna in the biased conceptual resources available' (Langton 2010, 459). For instance, before the concept of 'sexual harassment' entered public consciousness, women were hard-pressed to articulate their experiences with behaviours such as groping and leering, since these were not captured under criminal harassment prior to the naming of such experiences as sexual harassment (McKinnon 2016, 441). Another way to think about hermeneutical injustice is to think of 'wrongful interpretative obstacles that affect people differently in how they are silenced ... in their inability to express themselves and to be understood' (Medina 2013, 91).

However, there is in my view a non-standard type of epistemic injustice that persists even without there being a credibility deficit, and without interpretative obstacles, as per Fricker's standard view of testimonial and hermeneutical injustice. Now there is one epistemic injustice of this non-standard type that Fricker already identifies and accounts for in her work: *pre-emptive* testimonial injustice. Pre-emptive testimonial injustice refers to cases where an agent's testimony fails to be sought after in the first place. This is due to *structural* prejudice about the identity group to which the epistemic agent belongs (Fricker 2017, 9). Fricker says that groups susceptible to unjust credibility deficit 'will, by the same token, also tend simply not to be asked to share their thoughts, their judgements, their opinions' (Fricker 2007b, 130). This type of injustice thereby 'takes place in silence', (Fricker 2007b, 130) and it is an injustice that undermines the credibility of the speaker *in advance* of their speaking. This view gets a little closer to the kind of non-standard account I propose in this paper – but even this view misses the *anticipatory* elements I take to be worthy of philosophical attention and which ultimately characterize my own view.

My own view is that there is a non-standard kind of epistemic injustice that consists in the wrongs which arise in the *anticipation* of epistemic challenges to testimony sharing. This anticipation might manifest as various kinds of testimony-suppressing behaviour, including the withholding, diminishing, retracting, repudiating, and revising of one's own testimonies. In enacting such behaviour, agents are wronged both because they are unjustly *placed* in this position of epistemic precarity, and because they unduly partake in the relinquishing of more epistemically authoritative testimonial routes typically available to others. My view is that this phenomenon ought to count as a kind of epistemic injustice in its own right: as *anticipatory* epistemic injustice.

## Cases of Anticipatory Epistemic Injustice

In this section, I will describe and discuss several difficult cases that I believe are best captured by what I call anticipatory epistemic injustice, rather than the standard view of epistemic injustice as laid

out in the previous section, or indeed any other variety of epistemic injustice identified in the current literature. Consider the following:

### Case 1

Kirk Lougheed speaks of exclusions of the ‘intuitive knowledge’ of religious experience. Lougheed claims that many agents fail to report religious experiences because of the fear that negative prejudices about religious groups will pre-empt their testimony from being taken seriously (Lougheed 2020). He locates the issue in the ‘negative biases of would-be hearers’ (Lougheed 2020) which he believes causes this loss of testimony, and says that this phenomenon can be characterized as pre-emptive testimonial injustice. It seems, however, that this is better captured as anticipatory behaviour. It involves the policing of one’s own testimony out of fear, *prior* to any testimonial exchange, and without it necessarily being the case that a would-be audience has *in fact* excluded the would-be speaker. The mere *fear* of stigma – rather than actual stigma – undermines the agent’s *taking up* of the opportunity to give testimony, regardless of the audience’s willingness to listen. The focus is thus shifted from exclusion by a would-be audience, to one of the would-be speaker’s testimonial participation – or rather, their *hesitation* to participate based on a perceived anticipated challenge.

### Case 2

There are a variety of challenges associated with ‘coming out’ that pose difficulties for individuals. The simple case might involve something like a failure to come out as LGBTQIA+ to one’s immediate social community, due to anticipation of negative backlash. This negative anticipation can be generated and exacerbated by many factors. For example, a study on the association with shame and coming out in lesbians in mainland China and Hong Kong found that *shame* was related to ‘internalized heterosexism and a devaluation of one’s lesbian identity, which in turn was related to a decreased likelihood of coming out to others’ (Chow and Cheng 2010, 92). Something like shame, then, can be an additional hindrance to the sharing of testimony – coming out – regardless of cultural stigmas or social disapproval from a would-be audience.

Similar implications hold for other cases of ‘coming out’, such as disclosing that one has a mental illness. Public stigma is a factor in the difficulty of disclosure. There is prejudice and discrimination that might be generated when the general population endorses certain stereotypes – for example, that mentally ill people cannot hold down a job. But there is *self-stigma* too, which may lead mentally ill people to ‘suffer broad consequences including diminished self-esteem and self-efficacy’ (Corrigan et al. 2010, 2). In this case too, there is a mix of negative anticipation: one might be wary of reactions from the external world, but also be motivated to suppress testimony based on one’s own self-stigmas and negative self-perceptions. These personal, affective factors *exacerbate* existing anticipatory disincentives to the sharing of testimony, and plausibly constitute part of the mechanism of anticipatory epistemic injustice.

### Case 3

In an example I take from Trudy Govier’s discussion of Doris Brothers’ study on rape and incest victims, Govier emphasizes that erosion of *self-trust* occurred in the women who were interviewed. They tended to blame *themselves* for the events that happened to them, rather than to (rightly) fault the outside world for their trauma – perhaps as ‘a way of making sense of the world and reasserting a degree of control’ (Govier 1998, 89). As such, these agents asserted that the events which occurred were something they could have controlled, if only they did something differently themselves. The *anticipatory* element here is the fear of losing control over one’s life story, and the epistemic consequence of this is that the testimonial content dispensed with is shaped – or rather *distorted* –

in response to such perceptions. The *injustice* here is that one is in a position whereby one's testimony is prone to be unduly shaped by, for example, the fear of losing control over one's life narrative. In the process, more credible testimonial framings that do not involve such self-blame are obscured or blocked off to the agent. The lack of self-trust that the agents experience might make it so that it fails to occur to them that they could articulate their testimony to reflect the content that there is nothing they really could have done on their own to stop these events from happening. Testimony, in this case, strongly – yet unduly – reflects a narrative of self-endorsed self-blame, to the detriment of alternative testimonial routes.

The anticipatory behaviour in the cases above clearly vary, but affective elements (e.g., shame, fear) or self-regarding attitudes (e.g. self-doubt, lack of self-trust) which drive self-inflicted practices of testimonial withholding, and so forth, may contribute to how the anticipation is experienced by the agent. That is to say, an agent's internal make-up or psychology has a major role to play in the experience and even carrying out of potential anticipatory epistemic injustice to completion. Such elements shape not only the agent's decision to take up opportunities to share testimony, but also influence how they go about framing their testimonial *content*. These are elements that the standard view, and other non-standard types of epistemic injustice identified in the literature, do not easily capture. My next task, then, will be to clearly distinguish the phenomenon I describe herein from other kinds of epistemic injustice.

### Distinguishing Anticipatory Epistemic Injustice From Other Types

Let me now explain why the cases above are not adequately captured by the standard view, or something like pre-emptive testimonial injustice. Firstly, no identity-prejudicial credibility deficit has taken place in the aforementioned cases. And it is not, on my account, *necessary* for there to be a negative or antagonistic relationship between the would-be speaker and the would-be hearer to explain the dynamics of injustice in these cases. This is unlike the more standard cases of identity-prejudicial credibility deficit, in which it is necessary to identify the direct epistemic oppression of one group over another, marginalized group. Thus, the standard case of testimonial injustice does not cut it here. And while Fricker's view of hermeneutical injustice might explain the structural problem of there being a lack of social resources which the agent might employ as tools to help articulate their experiences – even in the absence of direct epistemic oppression by some specific and culpable *group* of agents – it does not describe the further problem of decisions to hold *back* from utilizing interpretive resources in one's testimonial practices.

Moreover, there isn't a specific audience we might blame for unduly *failing to consult* the agent's potential testimonial contributions, which make these cases fall outside of pre-emptive testimonial injustice. In regards to the decision about 'coming out', for instance, it does not seem like there is someone to blame for not having the foresight to coax such testimony out of somebody (indeed we might think it wrong to *force* it or to make someone *expose* such content against their will). It may well be, also, that an agent might be fortunate enough to receive the support, empathy, and understanding appropriate for an earnest listener once they *are* out. Similarly, in the last case study, agents have quite literally been *solicited* for their voices. The audience is a willing, rather than unwilling one and we might be assured that the narratives of agents who have experienced rape and incest were not unduly discredited. Of course, we could say there are underlying social stigmas, or prevalent rape myths, which have some part in the blame for anticipatory testimony-suppression, even if the audience seems innocuous to such testimony. But we might grant that the mere existence of social stigmas does not in themselves constitute failures to consult of the kind required for the case to count as pre-emptive testimonial injustice.

What about alternative accounts of the silencing variety? Even if my cases do not fit Fricker's accounts, one might claim that some of these cases might be easily explained in terms of Kristie Dotson's *testimonial smothering* or with some other non-standard account. Let us consider testimonial smothering. This occurs when a speaker 'perceives one's immediate audience as unwilling or

unable to gain the appropriate uptake of proffered testimony' (Dotson 2011, 244). When we try to communicate, we need an audience willing to listen and participate in linguistic reciprocity. When there is a failure of testimonial reciprocity owing to a pernicious and persistent type of ignorance – on the part of the audience – which harms the speaker (Dotson 2011, 238), they are recipients of a kind of *epistemic violence*. The kind of ignorance Dotson refers to results in 'an audience failing to meet speaker dependencies in a linguistic exchange' (Dotson 2011, 239). As such, testimonial smothering involves 'the truncating of one's own testimony in order to insure that the testimony contains only content for which one's audience demonstrates testimonial competence' (Dotson 2011, 244). Dotson characterizes this type of self-silencing as *coerced silencing*, whereby a speaker yields to the deficiency in their audience to understand and comprehend the speaker competently. Rachel McKinnon points out, for instance, that there's not much point 'bringing up the concept of white privilege to an audience of white nationalists' (McKinnon 2019, 290).

Dotson identifies how we can recognize testimonial smothering. First, the content of the testimony must be 'unsafe and risky', by which it is meant that the testimony can fail to be found fully intelligible by the audience, and is prone to the risk of 'leading to the formation of false beliefs that can cause social, political, and/or material harm' (Dotson 2011, 244). For example, in African American communities, testimony relating to domestic or sexual violence may be 'smothered' because the content of this type of testimony may be judged to bring harm to African American communities on the whole (e.g. perpetuating the racist stereotype of 'violent' Black men) due to epistemic deficiencies on the part of the audience to properly comprehend such testimonies. (Dotson 2011, 245) Dotson claims that in cases of testimonial smothering, the audience 'must demonstrate testimonial incompetence with respect to the content of the testimony to the speaker' (Dotson 2011, 245) and that this incompetence must follow from the pernicious type of ignorance mentioned in the previous paragraph. What happens, then, is that a speaker 'capitulates to the pressure to not introduce unsafe, risky testimony' (Dotson 2011, 245).

There is no doubt that testimonial smothering contains self-silencing that resembles the kind that I've claimed arises as a result of *anticipatory* concerns or challenges. As such it is now primarily from Dotson's view which my own account ought to be distinguished. Now there may be cases that overlap with both mine and Dotson's account, such as when one does not report rape out of anticipation that one might be disbelieved from relevant would-be listeners or due to 'social recrimination and privacy loss associated with reporting.' (Allen 2007, 627) Arguably, this might be thought of as a kind of coerced testimonial smothering, per Dotson's view, if we think this 'risky' testimony might otherwise be volunteered. And perhaps such cases are already well captured by Dotson's view, even where they also contain anticipatory elements. Furthermore, there are other limit cases identified in the literature that might also address *part* of the phenomena I describe in this paper, such as Charlie Crerar's taboo-related hermeneutical injustice<sup>1</sup> and Eric Bayruns Garcia's expression-style exclusion.<sup>2</sup>

Be that as it may, I believe the three case studies I explicated above highlight features that do not line up with Dotson's view. My cases distinctly lack the testimonial incompetence from hearers that would be necessary for Dotson's account of testimonial smothering. I have shown that self-silencing behaviour can be driven by negative anticipation that one's testimony might receive poor uptake.

Take our case of religious testimony, for instance. This case does not meet Dotson's account of testimonial smothering. It may be true that the mere *perception* that one's religious experiences will be stigmatized owes to shifting norms related to a cultural trend towards secularity. But unless we have reason to attribute significantly discriminatory or persecutory content on such norms, and to ascribe their endorsement to a perniciously ignorant party, there is no testimonially incompetent audience. It's just that religious types of testimony may not find particularly accommodating *platforms* given the increasing secularity of society, and as a result, agents might find it challenging still to share religious experiences. We might call this a tragedy, then, but this would not be tantamount to *epistemic violence*. My view has the advantage of being able to diagnose this case as an

anticipatory epistemic injustice worthy of mitigation, *without* it being necessary to identify a testimonially incompetent audience.

In the case of ‘coming out’, one might argue that self-silencing occurs because one smothers risky testimony to accommodate an unwilling and/or incompetent audience (e.g. not ‘coming out’ in a society that does not respect LGBTQIA+ individuals). But my own account of anticipatory epistemic injustice also provides a plausible explanation of this case, as I allow for the fact that being too *ashamed* to ‘come out’ can also count as a type of anticipatory behaviour constitutive of epistemic injustice. Moreover, because my view can identify these affective dimensions (e.g. feeling ashamed) as *driving* anticipatory testimony-suppressing behaviour, as part of a *range* of anticipatory behaviours, it is more inclusive than Dotson’s testimonial smothering (which characterizes the silencing as occurring because of an incompetent audience). Dotson’s view takes a more *externalist* view about what causes the epistemic injustice, whereas my view additionally allows for the fact that the individual who suffers may themselves also inflict and perpetuate the injustice they experience (though of course they may not be blameworthy for doing so).

Dotson’s language of testimonial smothering as an epistemic *violence* implies that self-silencing is triggered as a kind of necessity, a type of self-defense in capitulation to a certain audience, rather than as an autonomous *choice*. I take my own view of anticipatory epistemic injustice to cover a wider range of self-silencing scenarios than supposed by Dotson’s account. My view is that anticipatory, self-silencing behaviour can *also* manifest as choices that are *voluntary* and *uncoerced*, or at the very least fall short of the coerced/capitulating narrative advanced on Dotson’s view. Self-silencing agents who are given substantive assurances that they will suffer little penalty for sharing testimony, for instance when their trustworthy friends offer to listen without judgment, or agents who are granted sufficient anonymity and privacy (e.g. detailing their lives in a confidential therapy session), don’t then seem to smother their own testimonies as a result of a kind of epistemic violence in the fashion by which Dotson presumes epistemic violence proceeds. Yet the possibility that agents may, in spite of such safety measures, fail to take up opportunities to share testimony, is an awful illustration of their epistemically precarious position. This is not inconsistent with, nor does it discount, the *additional* risk of coerced silencing, which is more along the lines of Dotson’s concerns. Hopefully, my discussion herein demonstrates why overall it is *anticipatory epistemic injustice*, rather than Dotson’s self-silencing account, which best accounts for the less extreme scenarios of anticipatory self-silencing mentioned above.

## Anticipatory Injustice and Anticipatory Epistemic Injustice

I have thus far described some case studies of the phenomenon of anticipatory epistemic injustice, and pointed out the aspects of the cases that differentiate it as an anticipatory epistemic injustice rather than as a standard epistemic injustice or some other non-standard type, like Dotson’s account of testimonial smothering. In this section, I will detail anticipatory epistemic injustice further. I will, first, consider the concepts of *anticipation* and *anticipatory injustice* in general terms and as employed in other literatures. Then, I will consider why the anticipatory behaviour I am concerned with constitute an epistemic injustice.

Let us now think about the concept of *anticipation* and *anticipatory injustice*. A survey of these closely related concepts should enable us to understand the characteristics of anticipation better, and to help us get clearer on the nature of anticipatory epistemic injustice. Butz et al. talk about anticipatory behaviour as ‘a process, or behaviour, that does not only depend on past and present but also on predictions, expectations, or beliefs about the future’ (Butz, Sigaud, and Gerard 2003, 3). Interestingly, they talk about anticipation as meaning more than just *looking* to the future, but rather being about ‘the impact of the look into the future on actual behaviour’ (Butz, Sigaud, and Gerard 2003, 3). They say that in anticipating, we not only predict or expect a future event, but also change our behaviour accordingly (Butz, Sigaud, and Gerard 2003, 3). Anticipation in this sense does not appear to carry a particular ethical status, nor does it necessarily invoke injustice. The point at which



anticipatory behaviour constitutes anticipatory *injustice* rather appears to occur when agents' expectations and perceptions about the future involve possible injustices that might come their way, which substantively affect their experience of it. For instance, Shapiro and Kirkman mention that when injustice is anticipated by agents, it 'can bring about the perception, and possible reality, of injustice' (Shapiro and Kirkman 2001, 152). In the context of the legal justice system, for instance, Woolard et al. talk about anticipatory injustice as 'the expectation of unfair or discriminatory treatment in the legal system' (Woolard, Harvell, and Graham 2008, 207). When the agent does not *believe* they will be treated fairly, they are more likely to distrust authorities, less likely to comply with the law, and actually *find* injustice in their interactions. (Woolard, Harvell, and Graham 2008, 208) Anticipated injustice can shape the agent's reality in a harrowing way: it lowers their prospects and expectations of justice by pre-empting the experiential *reality* of injustice. Whether or not we are inclined to call *this* kind of phenomenon something akin to a self-fulfilling prophesy – 'a false definition of the situation evoking a new behavior which makes the originally false conception come true,' (Merton 1948, 195) as Robert K. Merton put it – the point is that negative anticipation itself can be the aspect that worsens the agent's experience of injustice.

Where do these ideas fit in relation to our epistemic context? I sympathize with both the point that anticipation can shape agents' behaviour, *and* that negative anticipation can exacerbate their reality, or experience, of injustice. Thus I am inclined to formulate anticipatory *epistemic* injustice as the wrongs that agents suffer because of the anticipated difficulties they face in relation to their taking up of opportunities to share and give testimony. Such anticipation would likely manifest as testimony-suppressing behaviour: as we've seen in the case studies, self-enacted testimonial suppression can take the form of straightforwardly withholding testimony, or it may even take the form of unduly distorting or packaging testimonial content into a revised format. Agents are wronged by this phenomenon both because they are unjustly *placed* in this position of epistemic precarity, which make them prone to all the affects and uncertainties that manifest as anticipatory behaviour, and because they unduly partake in relinquishing the more epistemically authoritative testimonial routes typically available to others.

Many agents have the privilege of having the ability to straightforwardly share testimony without undue worry, reservation, or self-suppressive enactments, and without it occurring to them that they ought to change their testimonial decisions based on anticipated negative consequences. We might think of agents suffering from anticipatory epistemic injustice, then, as *burdened* by opportunities to take up the testimonial routes we might easily otherwise take for granted. The injustice is partly explained by the social epistemic environment, but is also compounded by the agent's own reinforcement of testimony-suppressing behaviour.

Like anticipatory injustice, I take anticipatory epistemic injustice to involve predictions, perceptions, expectations, and beliefs – be they mistaken or not mistaken, conscious or unconscious – related to some ongoing epistemic challenge (e.g. a perceived lack of acceptance of their would-be testimony from the relevant audience), which affect the epistemic agents' behaviour and/or world (as when agents *withhold* testimony because of these anticipated outcomes). Analyzing the wrongs epistemic agents suffer on account of anticipatory epistemic injustice, then, would involve the following. It would involve assessing the anticipatory attitudes they've acquired in relation to some future epistemic challenge, it would involve looking into the agent's internal make-up or psychology, and also require evaluation of how they *manifest* testimony-inhibiting behaviours in response. Some agents, for instance, may be able to *overcome* anticipatory fears one way or other. An agent who lacks the dispositional or psychological features that make them sensitive to negative anticipation would not end up suffering from *anticipatory* epistemic injustice, even if they are prone to experience it in some other instance, or suffer *other* kinds of epistemic injustice. I take it that anticipatory epistemic injustice occurs primarily (and most severely) when agents *in fact* are affected by negative anticipation, and accordingly alter their behaviour in testimony-suppressing ways.

Now several ambiguities must be addressed about these alleged epistemic wrongs. First, one might ask how an agent is unjustly *placed* in this position of epistemic precarity, if, as I've suggested,



the testimony suppressing behaviour is self-inflicted, and there isn't a particular outside agent or group that necessarily enforces the testimony-suppression. Might we not say, then, that the phenomenon at hand is only one that marks out the difference between those who psychologically tend to develop negative anticipatory responses and those who do not? Secondly, and along the same lines, one might doubt whether manifesting negative anticipation by undermining the sharing of one's testimony is an *injustice* rather than just an unfortunate personal choice. After all, if the behaviour is plausibly self-inflicted, or at least falls short of coerced silencing, it is unclear where the injustice of the anticipation comes in. What is the source and nature of the injustice involved? We would need to work out what puts agents at risk of anticipatory epistemic injustice, and what would count as a *reasonable* expectation of some anticipated difficulty, against *unreasonable* or *unjustified* expectations of anticipated difficulty. We would hesitate to say that an unreasonable expectation of difficulty counts as an anticipatory epistemic injustice, rather than a case of, say, individual paranoia.

We might look for answers to both of these ambiguities by considering the past, recent, ongoing, or developing epistemic marginalization of the agent's identity group. Such marginalization, as I shall lay out below, explains both why the phenomenon of anticipatory epistemic injustice is indeed an injustice, and not *reducible* to some individualized psychological propensity for negative anticipation, despite its affective and psychological features. It also explains why agents can be viewed as unjustly placed in a position of epistemic precarity.

Suppose there is an agent whose testimony would encounter no resistance or difficulty being heard – given their membership in a non-marginalized group – yet on pain of anxiety and paranoia anticipate in terror some negative consequence. We might say they find themselves in an unfortunate predicament, and we might find them worthy of help and support (perhaps to overcome their unfounded and disproportionate fears about reception over their testimony). Yet we would hesitate to say that they experience an injustice, and this seems accounted for precisely by the fact that they are, in fact, epistemically non-marginalized. Some agents might find testimony-sharing challenging without it being related to a case of injustice *per se*. *Standard* experiences of worry, timidity, and anxiety about revealing facts about oneself and so on would fall short of anticipatory epistemic injustice. This is because they are individualized worries unrelated to one's membership in a marginalized identity group.

Instead we might say an anticipated difficulty is more likely to count as an anticipatory epistemic injustice (rather than an anticipatory epistemic misfortune) if the expected difficulties in question are related to the epistemically marginalized identity group to which an agent is ascribed membership. I utilize *epistemic marginalization* here as a kind of umbrella term, but I take it that plenty candidates exist for what counts as such, including subjection to standard epistemic injustices like being the target of identity-prejudicial credibility deficit. Patricia Hill Collins' well-known book *Black Feminist Thought* details, for example, how Black feminist thought and Black women's experiences are *subjugated* knowledge in the face of Eurocentric hegemonies, where 'white men control Western structures of knowledge validation ... and epistemologies of traditional scholarship' (Hill Collins 2000, 251). Or, take Venkatesh Vaditya's comments, which point out that 'people dominated on the margins have been the objects of study, or of the knowledge production process, but rarely the researchers, authors or theorists of their own experience' (Vaditya 2018, 273). Kristie Dotson, additionally, spoke of the idea that one can be epistemically *oppressed* by '... a persistent and unwarranted infringement on the ability to utilize persuasively shared epistemic resources that hinder one's contributions to knowledge production' (Dotson 2014, 116). This short survey indicates to us that there are plenty of ways agents might be epistemically marginalized in their positioning within an epistemic community, and that *how* people are identified has everything to do with it. One might have their perspective be diminished, be barred from participation as knowers in a communal epistemic realm, and so forth.

Given these possibilities – especially as part of social marginalization in general – one might, for instance, *reasonably* fear repercussion of their testimony related to their status as an LGBTQIA+ individual in certain contexts. It is in these sorts of cases, where unjust epistemic treatment of

a marginalized identity group recently was or is endemic to a society, that anticipatory epistemic injustice typically occurs. This is how agents are *placed* in a position of epistemic precarity by anticipatory epistemic injustice.

Still, it is possible for even marginalized agents to be *wrong* about how their voices might be received by others. It is also possible for there to be grey areas – for example, the consequences of religious testimony might be anticipated differentially depending on whether the community is tolerant. Moreover, the normative boundaries of any marginalization might shift over time. Be that as it may, this does not take away from the point that so long as agents within a given epistemic community can be differentiated by their particular privileges and disadvantages, and by probability of their reciprocity to epistemic marginalization, we would not simply say that *any* possible anticipation of difficulty in testimony sharing constitutes anticipatory epistemic injustice.

### Anticipatory Epistemic Injustice: A Pernicious Kind of Epistemic Injustice

Let me now flesh out why anticipatory epistemic injustice is a particularly pernicious type of epistemic injustice. Firstly, the unjust epistemic precarity that agents experience as a result of their marginalization, which place them at risk of anticipatory epistemic injustice, means that they are in this unfortunate circumstance long before any testimony-suppressing practice or instance is enacted. And the issue is compounded by the fact that agents may be affected by multi-level modes and dimensions of anticipatory relations; the anticipation may be *personal*, as is the case when one self-suppresses testimony; or *interpersonal*, as is the case when one fears judgment from one's own family; or a result of *structural*, even abstract issues, that are hard to pin down – as when, for instance, agents modify their epistemic behaviour due to fear and shame related to deviation from cultural norms because of probable stigmatization from *society*.

Furthermore, the challenges agents anticipate may be real or merely *perceived*. Either way, agents can suffer as a result. The anticipatory epistemic injustice does not disappear in the case that a challenge is merely perceived. One can make reasonable and justified assumptions or predictions about the challenges they'll face in giving testimony, for example, and end up not actually experiencing the anticipated difficulties. If an individual hesitates to 'come out' because they *perceive* and *anticipate* stigmatization from their conservative family, they suffer from anticipatory epistemic injustice – even if, upon coming out, it turned out that their family was understanding and accepting of them. The unexpected good consequences of testimony-sharing cannot discount or undo the anticipatory epistemic injustice experienced prior. It is unfortunate, then, that the mere fear of stigma, in the absence of actual stigma from the target audience, can constitute an epistemic injustice due to the agent's unjust epistemic precarity.

Anticipatory epistemic injustice is also an *ongoing* problem that is likely to collide with other epistemic injustices. As I have mentioned, anticipatory epistemic injustice is a major problem *prior* to testimony-sharing, if agents forgo opportunities to uphold their testimony in the first place on account of anticipatory concerns. But it is also a threat *during* testimonial exchange if anticipated difficulties to do with being heard, understood, and so forth, erode the speaker's confidence to *continue* sharing testimony. For example, one might realize that having to keep *defending* one's testimony to somebody who lacks understanding and similar experiences is more emotionally draining than one initially believed. This realization might put one off from telling the full story. Further, anticipatory epistemic injustice can lead to or link up with other epistemic injustices. For example, while one might eventually overcome the disincentivizing effects of anticipatory epistemic injustice and gain the confidence to share a testimony to be heard by a relevant audience, they may face threat of persecution and other undesirable consequences as a result of their sharing testimony. In other words, they might end up suffering from testimonial injustice proper. After all, we are assuming that the harms one might *anticipate* and respond to via anticipatory behaviour are based on credible and reasonably justified threats; so it would be no great surprise if the resulting events matched up with experiences of other types of epistemic injustice.

A final point I want to make about anticipatory epistemic injustice is that anticipation of epistemic difficulties may be *transparent* or *opaque*, which makes the epistemic injustice all the more challenging to target and rectify. It is *transparent* in the case that the individual in question is aware, or in the know, about the possible outcomes that await. Consider, for example, Joanne Limburg's piece on experiences of disability classification for *Aeon*. She writes,

Like many autistic people – particularly those who, like me, have gone through most of our lives knowing that we were different but not knowing why – I have absorbed the lesson that it is safer to pass if one possibly can, and I've grown accustomed to putting in a great deal of exhausting effort in order to do so, with the result that if I disclose my autism I am often met with comments such as:

'I would never have known.'

'But you don't look autistic.'

'But you make eye contact.'

'But I don't find you hard to get on with.'

'But you're nothing like my son/sister/cousin/clients/pupils ...' (Limburg 2020)

In these sorts of cases, it seems like the agent's response to the anticipated challenges to one's decision to disclose their experiences might proceed like a cost-benefit analysis. The choice to share might be weighed against the sheer follow-up *labour* required to respond to people's reactions, as seen in the above case, or it might be weighed against possible backlash (though we have already observed that probable outcomes are approximations). And it is precisely because of the burdens that are involved in sharing these particular experiences that we can also *understand* why it might make perfect sense to be wary of certain testimonial content, as something that does not automatically benefit the agent through disclosure. We might recognize that in a nuanced sense, anticipatory behaviour can *practically* protect the would-be speaker and safeguard them from the possible downsides of testimony-sharing. This example shows us, then, that the matter of *combating* anticipatory epistemic injustice is worryingly ambiguous, as anticipatory behaviour might be conceived as an individual measure to *manage* the risks associated with anticipated challenges.

In the *opaque* case of anticipatory epistemic injustice, agents self-silence without actually being aware of the reasons or forces that have shaped such anticipatory behaviour. For example, if an agent withholds testimony about being raped because they lack self-trust, and lack confidence in their own competence to speak on the events that have occurred, anticipated difficulties get unduly cast as a personal fault or flaw. It becomes increasingly difficult for the agent themselves to distinguish between reasons for their epistemic choices, and difficult also for others to identify the anticipatory epistemic injustice. But even in the case where the agent does not have full insight into their own epistemic behaviour – that is, even if they are unsure, or flat out wrong, about their reasons for self-silencing – it is clear that this is still a result of anticipated difficulties.

Both the transparent and opaque varieties of anticipatory epistemic injustice are comparable in severity. In the former, the agent must reckon with and consciously carry the burdens they anticipate, and the sacrifices they've made to endure them; in the latter case, agents may not even realize or be privy to the negative shaping forces of their epistemic decisions.

So, anticipatory epistemic injustice is particularly pernicious because it is multi-form and can be enacted at personal, interpersonal, and structural dimensions. Not only that, it can persist in response to both real *and* merely perceived threats – so it may even be self-generated in the latter case. It is an *ongoing* type of threat that has potential to affect every stage of epistemic exchange. Finally, the anticipation may be transparent or opaque to the agent. In the transparent cases, the agent knows what to anticipate, and accordingly adjusts their epistemic choices relative to their epistemic risk assessment. The agent in this case is wronged anyway, but their anticipatory behaviour is deliberate and may even confer practical protection. In the opaque case, however, the agent may not realise that their anticipatory behaviour is at odds with the epistemic opportunities they *should* have in the world; they inadvertently enact anticipatory behaviour. Such agents are also wronged, but they may not necessarily realize why. All of these pernicious aspects are generated by

the epistemic marginalization and the consequent precarity involved in the process and enactment of the phenomenon.

## Conclusion

Let me now summarize my findings of the phenomenon that is anticipatory epistemic injustice. I have claimed that anticipatory epistemic injustice is the wrong that epistemic agents may suffer as a result of anticipated challenges in their process of taking up testimony-sharing opportunities. It may manifest as testimony-suppressing behaviour, such as withholding, diminishing, retracting, repudiating, and revising one's own testimony in response to the anticipated challenges.

I differentiated anticipatory epistemic injustice from the 'standard view' of epistemic injustice, namely Miranda Fricker's testimonial injustice and hermeneutical injustice, by alluding to the possibility that the injustice can persist even without a specific occurrence of identity-prejudicial credibility deficit or a lack of interpretative resources. Further, I differentiated my view from Fricker's pre-emptive testimonial injustice – which consists of pre-emptive exclusion by a relevant audience – by pointing out some case studies that lack the element of an unwilling audience that unduly fails to consult the would-be speaker. It is possible, I claimed, for anticipatory epistemic injustice to arise and persist even without there being a negative dynamic between the would-be speaker and audience.

I also differentiated my view from Kristie Dotson's testimonial smothering by showing that anticipatory epistemic injustice captures cases that fall short of the epistemic *violence* characteristic of her view. Anticipatory epistemic injustice, in contrast to testimonial smothering, does not hinge on the pernicious ignorance of a potential audience, and anticipatory testimonial suppression is not necessarily of a capitulating or coerced kind. It may occur voluntarily, and in spite of adequate social support as well as competent would-be listeners. This is due to the fact that negative anticipatory perceptions may persist regardless, plausibly owing to the recently past, ongoing, or developing membership of the agent to an epistemically marginalized identity group.

With my case studies, I acknowledged the internal and psychological mechanisms by which anticipatory epistemic injustice might manifest. I claimed that these are the kinds of aspects not easily captured by other varieties of epistemic injustice. Most other accounts of epistemic injustice surveyed herein largely focused on how some *external* party, such as an oppressive audience, generates epistemic injustice. On my view, anticipatory behaviours are not merely injustices that befall an epistemic agent as a result of these outside forces, although we might view the fact *that* an agent is prone to experience anticipatory epistemic injustice as a matter beyond their control. My point was that the experience may also be part of one's agency: anticipatory behaviour can be self-transcribed and self-perpetuating, even as other agents or institutions play a major role in placing an individual in difficult circumstances. It is, I believe, an advantage of my view that it allows for individual agency to have a nuanced role in a concept like epistemic injustice. In effect, then, my account is a more *general* category or heuristic that captures the epistemic wrongs enacted by negative anticipation, without denying that there may be narrowed down manifestations of anticipatory behaviour that might be captured by other non-standard views.

Overall, I believe my account can usefully diagnose as cases of epistemic injustice a variety of non-standard cases that involve anticipatory behaviour to do with testimonial self-suppression. I hope the case studies I discussed, alongside my characterization of the phenomenon and listing of some of its most pernicious features, brought to light its worrying nature as a distinct type of epistemic injustice worthy of recognition and consideration.

## Notes

1. Charlie Crerar argues that Fricker's paradigm case of hermeneutical injustice, which involves a lack of 'appropriate interpretative terminology with which to conceptualize some important experience' (Crerar 2016, 196), neglects to cover hermeneutical injustice that might occur even 'in the presence of an adequate conceptual

repertoire' (Crerar 2016, 196). Crerar claims that there are certain social costs that accompany taboo topics which may '... disable or at least obstruct the use of concepts that would otherwise help individuals render an experience fully intelligible to themselves and to others' (Crerar 2016, 205). Crerar continues that countering this requires an *expressively free environment*, in which concepts can be discussed in a receptive setting. In my view, taboo-related hermeneutical injustice could constitute one example of an anticipatory epistemic injustice to the extent that anticipation about reception of taboo affects the agent's testimonial choices.

- Eric Bayruns Garcia's *expression-style exclusion* refers to the variety of ways that agents can say something; for instance, an agent can say *p* forcefully, quickly, deferentially, and so forth. An expression style can maximize 'a speaker's audience's understanding of an argument relative to the argument's content' (Garcia 2019, 249). Garcia argues that '... dominant-identity-group-member speakers can engage in a wider range of expression styles than non-dominant-identity-group-member speakers without a similar loss of understanding in a speaker's audience or bad epistemic consequences' (Garcia 2019, 250). In his example, if a black woman refrains from expressing her thoughts in an 'understanding-maximizing expression style' because she knows that her audience might participate in testimonial injustice 'given the ubiquity of identity prejudices like the angry-black-woman stereotype' (Garcia 2019, 250), then she suffers from expression-style exclusion, but there isn't a particular agent responsible for this. This view seems to describe a possible *manifestation* of anticipatory behaviour but is limited to expression style.

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*J. Y. Lee* obtained her PhD in Philosophy from the University of Bristol. She is currently working as a postdoctoral researcher on the Velux Foundation funded project, 'The Future of Family Relationships', which explores the ethics of family ties in light of social and technological change, at the University of Copenhagen.

## ORCID

J. Y. Lee  <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-1573-7139>

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