The Plot Thickens: Thick Concepts as Social Factors of Oppression on Moral Decisions and Injustice

Abstract

Social dimension of moral responsibility has started to gain more attention in moral philosophy, be it within the network of action theory, or any other meta-ethical domain. Although there are many social acts and therefore social dimensions of responsibility, I aim to indicate one aspect of sociality in our thinking and practice, particularly in our moral thinking, that is the thick concepts. In this work, I consider Vargas's concept *moral ecology* (2015, 2018) as a tool to understand certain social aspects of moral responsibility, while claiming to extend his line of thinking in moral ecology by giving a more active role to the individual agent within the ecology that she is engaged in. I claim that when we understand the relationships between the agent and her surrounding ecology in a more complex, and under certain circumstances in a rather reciprocal way, we can have a better and more nuanced understanding of non-ideal moral landscapes that we are engaged in, while maintaining a certain kind of responsibility to the agents in their social environments. I will use the term *niche construction* and *niche selection* – concept that are already at use within the similar biological line of thought within action – to refer to such situations where agents are actively shaping their environments.

Introduction

Moral responsibility, when conceived as not something that is attached to the individual in an essential way, but as an emergent property that comes about in the social relations, allows us to investigate non-ideal and oppressive situations much clearer. In this work, I will analyze not only intra personality of moral responsibility, but also how does the agent's choices – implicit or explicit – to become a member of a social group while excluding other groups shape her own agency. I claim that when understanding social, we should be looking at real social situations and structures more than the abstractions of them. I think Young's (1990) understanding of social group can be helpful to identify the relationships between the groups and members of these groups. Furthermore, in most of the literature on the social aspects of moral responsibility – perhaps starting from Strawson's (1962) "relationality" – responsibility started to be seen as a relational quality amongst the relationships of agents. (Hutchison, Mackenzie, Oshana, 2018). In a sense this is in the direction of a continuation of my earlier analysis of the subject to theory (Altinok, 2019), which I find lacking, in the sense that the subject is not given any power in her relationship to her surroundings.

However, one primary issue with respect to attributing responsibility through rather psychological processes and actions following them to the agent and the general social relationships that are more abstract as they are generally conceived, remains a gap to be filled within the literature. Agents' choices and their relationships are structured through the society that the agents live, however in most of the cases in today's developed world, agents are engaged in a manifold of social relations, they become or lose agency in different contexts, at least in the circumstantialist understanding (Holroyd, 2018, p. 142).

The experiences we have in the society are largely determined by the social structures that we are engaged in. It is not only them which define how we are going to experience the world, but also we define how they are going to be shaped and maintained, as well as in what kind of a social world we live. Of course, these are never absolutely free choices and there are many factors that undermine autonomy, however, I believe that depending on the circumstances, it is reasonable to assume a certain level of flexibility in most cases.

My claim here is, currently, fewer and fewer people are becoming explicitly racist, sexist or other kind of "classical oppressor" as a general trend, however oppressive practices are still present in many places and practices. As Young (1990, p. 41) defines oppression;

"In its new usage, oppression designates the disadvantage and injustice some people suffer not because a tyrannical power coerces them, but because of the everyday practices of a well-intentioned liberal society."

Under this curtain, peoples' implicit biases based on perception of identities are shaped. Such perceptions do not always come in a blanket form, in the shape of "all black sounding names" or "all women", however, certain types of behavior which are associated strongly with the identity. Of course, albeit unfortunately, in all societies there still exist explicit oppression in the form of sexism, racism cis-genderism, classism, etc. however, my inquiry mainly aims at the implicit biases and how their formation can be seen as an active fostering of agency. For example, an implicit homophobe might see the vast majority of heterosexual relationships "nonproblematic" and "normal", while he does not deny that LGBT+ people are in principle or fundamentally equal to heterosexuals, he finds certain sexual display of relationships between gay men "lewd", while a similar behavior done by heterosexual couples would look "proper" to him. Eventually this can (and I think it does) lead to a social category by implicitly discriminatory people that has no empirical content. The concept of "women" to the modern sexist exist by itself but realized very seldom as a real entity that he encounters, while for the old fashioned sexist, it is a true category

that applies to many women he sees. For the modern sexist, the majority of women that he encounters are "lewd", "prudes", etc. meaning that he already has a judgement on them which objectifies and that way treats them unequally.

This is why, thick concepts, as they define and evaluate at the same time, are important in our judgements and in the formation of our implicit biases. Vargas's (2015, 2018) understanding of *Moral Ecology*, therefore can be expanded to be more comprehensive in twofold manner, in the case where agent becomes active to choose and reconstruct her own *niche*, and as the agent chooses to become a different kind of agent while choosing to become a member of another group, leading to her to a new agency. Furthermore, agents are moving through the social networks by usage of evaluative descriptions that result in testimonial injustices. I think we can reconstruct a different understanding of responsibility from this perspective.

Social Aspects of Moral Responsibility as Moral Ecology; Forming Implicit Bias

Vargas (2015, 2017, 2018) builds his case for moral ecology, in which our sociality as agents are constructed through our practices and our relationship to the environment. While he examines moral responsibility under oppression in particular, he asses a different, revisionist form or agency that is constructed through our social relations and our "enabling conditions". The big break in his work from the general accounts of agency is not particularly in finding reasons that make actions excusable or non-culpable due to agents being under oppression. As he puts it socially; (2018)

"A good deal of our moral sensibility is socially constituted. However, it is not merely that social influences sometimes bypass our rational, valuing agency, but that these influences just are the things that generate and sustain our motivations, cares, values, and habits of regard in the first place." (p. 114)

His revision is distinguished with respect to focusing on agency itself, and recreating agency in a "non-transcendental" manner. This way of thinking of agency handles the established environment and agent distinction quite differently. The agent is in no place to have judgements of its own detached from the environment, but the environment is also a part of the agent. He further argues that our intuitive understanding of agency is embedded in a folk understanding which is far from correct when compared to the recent developments about agency in cognitive science. (2018) In the current cognitive, brain and environmental sciences, certain views that support that agency is shall be seen "distributed" started to gain strong ground. In this perspective, agents are not like "ghosts in a machine", but rather a "coalition" of different ways of thinking, which lead to a

temporal self through interrelation of different reasons of thinking (Clarke 2007). Agency seen as such becomes much more fluid, that is to say, instead of a strict and sticky personality or an ideal being.

From this construction, in his *The Social Constitution of Agency and Responsibility; Oppression, Politics, and Moral Ecology* Vargas moves on to oppression for oppressors as an exculpating factor. Since the agency of the oppressor is also constructed around what is environmentally or socially available to the agent, the agent becomes responsible *pro tanto* within these limitations when her implicit biases are formed to shape her agency (2018).[1]

Eventually, his argument leads to possible political answers to intervene in the moral "ecology" of the agents. The ecology seen as such, makes us understand it in terms of enabling or impeding conditions of agency. The metaphor or ecology is meaningful, since we tend to think of organisms in an environment being shaped by the surrounding biological and non-biological factors. Furthermore, this way Vargas can create a basis for the political intervention to the ecology of the agents. This way, agency becomes both independent, in the sense that moral ecology is still surrounding the agents, and dependent, since agency is constituted of various external-looking factors.

In his suggestions for how revisions of our moral environment (2018), Vargas leaves it open ended, be it in a liberal democracy or other forms of intervention in the enabling of different forms of agency that are more positive than the current state of affairs for the agent. For the liberal example, he employs the canteen analogy, where salad is put closer to the people than unhealthy food in order to encourage them to have salad rather than nutrition that is not good for their overall health, without overriding the autonomous agency of the individual.

I am quite positive about the general outlook of the project; however, I think there are a couple of difficult situations in this account. It can be generalized into one single central point, the agent in this perspective is rather passive in its own constitution. The agency is produced through various feedback mechanisms or social "forces"; yet, during the whole process the effect of the agent towards the structure is overlooked. The forces and feedback mechanisms look rather

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[1] Different kinds of oppressor responsibility are discussed within a wider social context, notably by Calhoun (1989). Although I think Vargas's (2018) accounts of more flexible responsibility attachment to individuals to reach a certain end seems to be on the same line with Calhoun to me.

homogeneous in Vargas's accounts. However, Vargas also embraces plurality in the society. One example is obviously this:

"Being raised in an anti-racist context presumably plays a role in enhancing sensitivity to moral considerations tied to anti-racist concerns. Similarly, being raised in a sexist, fascist, or classist culture will often shape a person's dispositions to ignore egalitarian concerns" (Vargas, 2015, p. 247).

Vargas accepts the role, and quite naturally he also sees the diversity in our societies.[2] However, the agents' role to navigate themselves within the social networks and different parts of sub-cultures, communities, circles is lacking in this picture. This does not contradict his analysis of moral ecology, but I think enhances it. I believe that in many cases in post-industrial relatively socially liberal societies, it is fair to assume that people have certain degrees of freedom to move within the social networks, change their relationships, in short, *move to a different niche* in their moral ecologies and furthermore, construct these *niches* so that other agents can also *migrate* there.

To illustrate Vargas's take on the passivity of subject[3] let us look at a different work.

"… if we tell children that their socially significant qualities are not fixed, but instead subject to improvement through effort and practice, such qualities are likely to be subject to more self-development (Dweck and Molden 2008). So, perhaps responsibility for implicit bias based action will work in a similar fashion: by promulgating narratives of control and responsibility for bias, we might make it the case that agents come to have more control and responsibility for their biases." (2017, pp. 24-25)

In another work again, Vargas emphasizes the effect of oppression on the individual. "Oppression can affect both what an agent can do but also an agent's deliberations and beliefs." (2018, p. 124) He furthermore, puts forward "feedback mechanisms" that shape the beliefs and the agency of the people; yet, it seems to me that the "social forces" as Vargas (2018) puts it, operate on the agent

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[2] Which is actually almost his starting place for the responsibility under oppression.

[3] I do not claim that the subject or agent is active or passive as an ultimate property, I am inclined to believe that there are situations that make us more active or passive, as well as certain personality traits, environments, etc. are always involved in the process. My sole claim is that, the cases where the agent is actively choosing to become a member of a certain group or leave a moral ecology are not rare in the given societies.

unidimensional. The young adolescent rebel that opposes the "tyranny" of the parents, society, etc. are not to be found in his analyses.[4]

However, my position is not against that of Vargas (2018), on the contrary, I think that in order to achieve an understanding of "moral ecology" we should see ecology as we see it in biology – a complex network of relationships where the agent is shaping and being shaped by the environment simultaneously. In order to see the network that the agency is shaped, I will now look into social constructivist literature.

Sociality of Moral Agents and Implicit Biases

When scholars write about implicit biases, they generally tend to focus on large social groups such as women, LGBTQ+ individuals, African-Americans, working class people and similar groups which have histories of oppression. It is understandable that from a general social perspective these social groups shape many things in our social, political, economic and ethical lives. However, when we place ourselves at the other end of the spectrum, as individuals and agents, and analyze how the social structures that we are involved in are shaped by us and that shape our agency, I think we can do better with looking at smaller social structures shaping our agency.

Mallon defines social categories in a causal manner:

"The upshot of all this is that, where there are representations distinguishing category members, the members can come to be increasingly differentiated via causal pathways that include (but are not limited to) intentional actions, representational effects on automatic behaviors, and environmental construction. In this section, I argue that such covert social role categories can be human kinds, which is to say, kinds that support induction, prediction, explanation, and intervention in some or another of our inductive projects. I do so by arguing that the kinds amount to homeostatic property-cluster kinds." (2016, p. 89)

Therefore, this allows us to have an understanding of our social surroundings that are effective as long as they influence our behavior and thinking. In that regard I am in the same line with Haslanger (2012) as she claims, creating social categories is a very human activity, which is embedded in our practical needs and uses. I claim further that, such categories are useful in a more minimalist manner rather than maximalist manner in most cases for us individuals when it comes to shape our agencies (Altinok et. al. 2021). A state might want to know sex of the individuals, but individuals

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[4] My aim here is not to pinpoint one particular aspect, that is the rebellious teenagers, but how the social forces are experienced and ordered by the agent seem to be missing in the overall structure of the concept moral ecology.

themselves are in certain cases more interested in finding out whether a person is "lewd" or not regardless of her sex or gender. The industrialist might be interested in knowing "the working class" while the "gentleman" is more interested in knowing people who are "rude". Haslanger distinguishes between "thin" and "thick" social positions;

> "The distinction between "thick" and "thin" social positions I'm relying on deserves more attention than I can devote to it here. However, the basic idea is that some social positions carry with them more demanding norms, expectations, and obligations than others; some carry more privileging entitlements and opportunities than others. "Thin" social positions carry very little social weight. "Thick" social positions can empower or disempower the groups standing in those positions. Being a widow in the contemporary United States is a much thinner social position than being a widow in, say, the region where Christiana lives." (2012, p. 126)

As put forward by Haslanger, the thickness or thinness of a certain social position is not predetermined. Indeed, these are not ideal positions that are independent of our activity but rather closer to Hacking's (1999) definition of social construction in the sense that our concepts that exist in a matrix of relations are there to serve certain purposes. My claim is, unlike very broad and encompassing social positions such as gender, race, or sexual orientation, at least in the post-industrial societies, the small-scale social categorizations that are prevalent such as "lewd", "prude", "bore", "rude", "nasty" etc. determine how we categorize people differently in the very first place. Such "thick concepts"[5] describe also what kind of activities we are involved in. Imagine a group of teenagers who are going to enjoy a weekend out, their aim is to have fun, get drunk and break some rules while doing so. In their activities as such, they categorize their friends accordingly. They *evaluate* their friends positively or negatively in a certain way and the certain way the evaluated are *described* show us the criteria why they do not qualify. For example, one might not qualify because she is "a prude" while another might not qualify because he is "a bore".

When implicit biases are researched, similar indicators are used to determine the very existence of such biases. Bessenoff & Sherman (2016), provide an empirical study on how people have automatic reactions based on the stereotypes of different people, in their case, this is fat and thin women. In their study they also associate different stereotypical words such as "kind", "friendly", "disciplined", "lazy" and "demanding" when associating photos of people to their personalities.

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[5] I will go in detail about thick concepts in the following part, for now I only want to indicate that this pair of "thick" and "thin" are originating from Bernard Williams' (1985) conception and are different from that of Haslanger in terms of categorization, it is a lucky coincidence that they meet.

One interesting aspect of studies in implicit bias is, they match a preexisting bias to a social group while actually with respect to causal accounts of social constructivism the social group which is biased is already explicitly mentioned. The difference is of course, while for many agents discriminating against "lewd" people is not a problem whereas discriminating against women is. This kind of implicit bias research fill the gap between association of explicit such small social group biases to large and supposedly unbiased groups. While such research definitely has results and benefits of its own, I think when it comes to agency cultivation and responsibility of the agent within her own agency cultivation, smaller social groups and the vast network of social and ethical communities become more important.

The smaller social groups are descriptively and evaluatively quite central to our thinking and social lives and they are extremely effective in shaping our eventual attitudes leading to implicit biases. The agents in the groups which are "lewd" users also encounter other moral communities, individuals and relationships. They decide to change their beliefs or not, become members of other groups or not, confront with their "lewd user" friends in their groups with their newly attained agencies or keep their previous agency and confirm with their social groups.

Before going to the moral responsibility aspect of these groups, I will briefly mention the thick social categories. I think there is one crucial distinction to be made when it comes to moral evaluation. In most cases when we encounter morally relevant events and agents, yet we do not encounter them in a purely descriptive way. We use our moral evaluation before, during and after the moral encounters within the social groups, furthermore our moral thinking is highly mediated though the employment of thick concepts.

Social Thick Concepts

Bernard Williams (1985) famously called for an extension in the scope of available concepts for ethicists beyond *good* and *bad*. In our daily lives as well as our in ethical theory making, we employ concepts such as *lazy*, *timid*, *gracious*, *harsh*, *industrious*, *nasty*, etc. to both evaluate and describe certain aspects of life, actions and groups of people. The concepts which evaluate and describe at the same time such as *cruel* are define as *thick concepts*, whereas purely evaluative concepts such as *good* and *bad*[6] are defined to be *thin concepts*. Thick concepts are much more diverse in their content, and provide a lot of descriptive element to the discussion, while thin concepts are much more straightforward in their usage and content.

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[6] And as it seems that about all.

Kirchin (2017) discusses the possibility of thick concepts being prior to thin concepts in our judgements. I do not want to make a generalized statement about this here[7], however, my claim is, I think at least in social relations and social evaluations, many people use *social thick concepts* such as *lame*, *lazy*, *imbecile*, etc. more often than the thin concepts.[8] Kirchin (2017) further claims that, our thin concepts and our evaluative strength are not uniform. We can call things *OK*, *amazing*, *good*, *acceptable* etc. while we evaluate them and these stances definitely have different meanings, showing our different attitudes towards a certain situation. It is easy to see that when even the thin concepts are coming in a degree, the thick concepts we employ come to be in varying strengths. The aspects of the world that they capture in their descriptive side is of course, very diverse. We use thick concepts very often in art, social relations, even in science and philosophy (Kyle, 2013). And thick concepts can mean different things for different agents, societies and cultures. A fairly thick concept such as fascist was something to be praised in certain societies and unfortunately still is being praised by certain people, while for the rest, it has definitely negative evaluation.

The thick concepts provide an area for our thinking, they limit our thinking of the other social agents, they shape how we perceive them and they also make us evaluate them. While the evaluative part of the concept is used to strengthen or weaken our stance towards a certain thing, the descriptive part selects this thing out of our personal relationships. Our agency emerges within social relationships (Quante, 2018), however as we can simply observe, it does not "go away" as soon as our social conduct is finished. On the contrary, certain life changing experiences and encounters we have can lead us to new agencies. The agency exists in a non-isolated social form; it is an idealization we have from our social experiences in line of thinking of Vargas (2018).

I think thick concepts are crucial to understand the complexity of the social networks that we are involved in. They are the basis for "stereotypes" for larger groups and they are the *modus operandi* of implicit biases and discrimination. Oshana sees construction and application of stereotypes as a threat;

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[7] For thick concepts and their significance, see Kirchin (2017) and Väyrynen (2013)

[88] This is of course, when general social groups such as *women*, *black*, *LGBTQ*, etc. are considered not to be thick concepts and are seen devoid of evaluative elements. Indeed, this does not need to be the case, especially in explicitly discriminatory behaviors, this is the exact thing that makes a behavior explicitly biased. When a person admits that his perception of women is based on a discriminatory basis where he evaluates openly negatively, then there is no room left to see whether the individual is sexist or not. For the purposes of this work, I will stick to general understanding of liberal, postindustrial societies, however in such societies of course there exist – sometimes many – openly sexist, racist homophobic individuals.

""Stereotype threat is "the risk of confirming, as self- characteristic, a negative stereotype about one's group" (Steele and Aronson 1995, 797). It "manifests itself when members of a group that is negatively stigmatised at some task are made aware of their group membership in a high stakes situation where they care about doing well" (Saul 2015)." (Oshana, 2018, p. 87)

I think while this applies to large social groups, that can also be the case for smaller social groups that are defined through social thick concepts. Furthermore, if we accept the constructivist understanding of social groups, there are many such concepts that we employ and are here to stay. The concepts that are employed to restrict certain general social groups such as women, such as *lewd* or *slut* has been very stubborn concepts, so much that they have their place also as insults which create enable them to be objects of certain legal proceeding, recreating the causal power of the concept. While the definition and the descriptive limits are open to question, they nonetheless keep their evaluative properties. Although, society is so complex that, sometimes it even allows people to be "pro" negatively evaluative concept and categorization.[9]

Consider another example from Oshana;

"At the time of his death, Martin was returning to his father's home from a nearby convenience store. He carried on his person a bottle of iced tea and a bag of Skittles candy. Martin was clad in a hooded sweatshirt, something his killer, George Zimmerman (and others) likened to "gangsta" wear. Despite being warned by an emergency police dispatcher not to pursue the matter on his own, Zimmerman followed Martin, claiming that Martin's behavior was "suspicious." This much is clear from Zimmerman's remarks to the dispatcher." (Oshana, 2018, p. 98)

In this example, Zimmerman acted not because Martin was black, but because he looked "gangsta", which can be positive and negative in different social contexts. When encountering law-enforcement, it is obviously evaluated rather negatively, while for certain sub-cultures it can be seen a very positive thing. Now let us consider that the descriptive content of the concept "gangsta" covers 50% of black men, while for white men it does not even apply as a category. In this case the evaluative aspect is evaluating people depending on their race differently. And when the positive evaluation is done by socially deprived groups while negative evaluation is done by the people in positions of power, the inequality is a direct result. Or as the saying goes "a white man with a machine gun is a "patriot", a black man with a machine gun is a "thug" while a brown man with a machine gun is a "terrorist".

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[9] Slutwalks can be a good example here.

What makes implicit biases implicit is simple, it evaluates and through that discriminates against a certain group without the agent holding these biases awareness of them. Implicit biases are considered to be "introspectively opaque" to the person who holds them, and recalcitrant, in the sense that they are not easily amenable to reflective correction and control" (Washington and Kelly 2016, p. 18). However, I think such implicit biases, when seen in a piecewise manner where agent's evaluation is not against the identity itself but certain members of large social groups, when these members express their freedoms in anyway become rather explicit to the agent. A racist agent can hold that Muslims are "not an issue", but "radicals" are, while defining the concept of radical evaluatively negative, the descriptive content captures the situation unequally. I think there is an element of injustice here, however my aim is to look at another direction on this subject to be back at responsibility and injustice.

Linguistic and Intellectual Environment – Niche Selection and Niche Construction

I have argued that the social networks that we are involved in are very complex, so much that an insult for a group can even be a praise for them in certain contexts, discriminatory behaviors and thoughts exist in a very diverse scope and our implicit biases towards certain groups can be explicit biases towards subgroups. Here, I will defend the view that, unlike Vargas's understanding of agency becoming a construct of the circumstances rather passively, I will argue that the agency can also have a degree of freedom to choose different kinds of agency, and when he does not, he is actually causing certain injustices.

How do the agents move amongst different communities? I think one way of doing it[10] is obviously through accepting or refusing certain norms of the community. Frye (1983) shows us that, oppression generally works in a very structural manner, in which the agents who are serving a structural oppressive network do not have direct decisions of oppression, but nevertheless are causing it to operate. These structures are similar to Vargas's (2018) ecology, in which agency is constructed. However, different conditions lead to different agencies as well. The concepts that the agents see permissible, available, right and wrong are also changing through development. Recall how Vargas (2015) defines "being raised in an anti-racist context" influence the morality of the agent. At the other end, he also claims that:

"Oppression can also alter epistemic agency by changing which possibilities are deliberatively accessible to the agent. If one has internalized oppressive norms or cultural scripts, these things

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[10] I think this is a very general social phenomenon, although I will not discuss how often it is the case or not.

shape one's deliberations about what actional possibilities are relevant in a given circumstance." (Vargas, 2018, p. 125)

I do not argue against him here; I think these are very clear points. However, what I see as lacking is the "process" of being raised and how the individual tackles the mechanisms of oppression. Ünlü (2018) tell us that the oppressed groups find many ways to tackle the systemic oppression, although these processes are harmful to them, they find different moral communities. For oppressors also, Ünlü sees that, although there are blinding factors, there are also possibilities of creating different social and moral communities.

The oppressor agent can take two routes here, she can *move* to different environments and even *create* certain environments. Creation also entitles another kind of responsibility; since we already accept the revisionist account of agency, the creation of the environment is also creation of certain agencies that can lead to harmful results. This is obviously a moral issue, however, I would like to elaborate more on testimonial injustice in agency development in the social networks.

Fricker (2007) creates an account of epistemic injustice, which goes into two divided paths. On one end there are hermeneutical injustices, where people who are oppressed do not possess the conceptual frames to tell their worries whereas on the other end, there are testimonial injustices where the knower's word is not credited as an equal knower. In her own definition:

"At any rate, since it is not always possible to 'correct for' the impact of prejudice by making a neat compensatory reflation of credibility, let us say that, one way or another, the virtuous hearer neutralizes the impact of prejudice in her credibility judgements. This, then, is the anti-prejudicial virtue we are looking for. Its possession requires the hearer to reliably neutralize prejudice in her judgements of credibility. Let us call it (what else?) the virtue of testimonial justice." (Fricker, 2007, p. 92)

I think the oppressive groups largely keep their oppressive moral communities with doing these testimonial injustices towards oppressed groups and individuals. In today's world where there are vast networks of egalitarian thought, people who still hold implicit biases are the ones who are discriminating against certain subgroups. By the employment of thick social concepts, agents do testimonial injustices against subgroups such as rights activists. The virtue of testimonial justice is gained or lost through doing injustice in this regard.

Imagine a case where Johannes is growing up in a traditional implicitly sexist and racist family in a liberal postindustrial society. Most probably his environment will not be explicitly racist or sexist

but implicitly so. According to Vargas's (2018) account, we would imagine his "moral ecology" to be a determinant in his agency. However, in 2018, although most of his friends and family can be also implicitly racist or sexist[11] he is likely to encounter certain "radicals" in his environment, be it in the social media, school, daily life etc. Although he has these encounters, since he already has thick social categories to enable him to do testimonial injustice to radical or non-radical, different encounters.[12] He can call her a feminist whoever advocates something about women's rights and this way does not feel the need to adjust his own beliefs and agency to the demands of the agent he encounters. Because of that, he can see some women lewd and does not have to change his beliefs about morality and sexuality. The list goes on, where eventually the oppressed group's –here women– almost all members are under testimonial injustice. And this is not only subject specific, he can disqualify "lewd people" from agency because he does not think that they are his equals.

This point is further investigated by Fricker (2007) as she calls, through this way people can objectify oppressed social groups and therefore not take them as agents proper. I think this also applies to Mason's (2018) case when she mentions the difference between old fashioned and new generation sexist, where the old fashioned is explicitly sexist and does not do much about his sexism, the new sexist is implicitly sexist, and although there are tools available to him to change his behavior, he does not. Moreover, when an agent changes her agency towards a new form of agency, the very biased form or agency also produces micro mechanisms again through the thick social concepts and environment in which the agency of the others is constituted.

Therefore, my addition to the concept of moral ecology is not that it is a wrongful conception of agency, but it should be more inclusive in the light of the above discussion. The very agency transformation, agency keeping and making other people agents involves many acts that are in fact injustices. Therefore, being implicitly biased is not a self-standing property, instead it is obtained and kept with effort. What kind of responsibility is best to understand this kind of injustice is an open question. However, I am sympathetical towards a positive conception of responsibility, which includes "being responsible" rather than "holding people responsible" (Mason, 2018). In this account, people should strive to become better agents and agents should seek to "own" responsibility rather than holding each other responsible.

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[11] And of course, some explicitly.

[12] I think this phenomenon is most important in cases of rights' advocates. Since they do not only challenge testimonial injustice but also try to change the conceptual framework that the agent operates in.

Conclusion

One becomes a member of an oppressive group not only by holding certain beliefs as themselves, he becomes a member of an oppressive group by actively participating in their activities. These activities include holding discriminatory beliefs towards all – through direct oppressive tendencies – or some – through discriminating against certain subgroups within the oppressed groups – members of those groups. This entails two things; first is that, through this kind of active discrimination which usually comes in the form of thick concepts, the member – or soon to be a member – is doing epistemic injustice towards the members of the oppressed group. Therefore, the way we end up with certain beliefs and implicit biases is through a network of *injustices* we are involved in while becoming a member of the oppressor social group.

Does this mean that, people who are unable to recognize other agents properly are out of guilt? I do not think so, but I would rather recommend something similar to Vargas's (2018) approach. Since evaluation is in the core of certain modes of our thinking about particularly social relations, situations and agents, "preemptive intervention" to evaluation is also a possible domain. I do believe that when we can distinguish between the evaluative language and use non-evaluative similar words or, use the evaluative ones with explication of them and supporting the positive evaluations in description of certain social groups, events, situations, we can have a much easier way to make people recognize other agents' agency and make them much more morally relevant to them.

In many cases of ecological intervention, the disastrous outcomes are the results of ignorance, denial or non-consideration of the active behavior of the organisms – individual or collective. Even when the cases of intervention can be directly from the natural ecosystems, such as in the example of Great Dying, where the O^2 concentration raised so high due to relatively newly emerging trait of photosynthesis that, this led to an enormous decline in the temperatures, leading to death of more than 90% of the species living. I believe that can be the case in interventions without considering niches in our moral ecology, the cases of backlashes and ineffective policies being some of the possible scenarios.

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