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Harms and Wrongs in Epistemic Practice

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Abstract

This volume has its roots in two recent developments within mainstream analytic epistemology: a growing recognition over the past two or three decades of the active and social nature of our epistemic lives; and, more recently still, the increasing appreciation of the various ways in which the epistemic practices of individuals and societies can, and often do, go *wrong*. The theoretical analysis of these breakdowns in epistemic practice, along with the various harms and wrongs that follow as a consequence, constitutes an approach to epistemology that we refer to as *non-ideal epistemology*. In this introductory chapter we introduce and contextualise the ten essays that comprise this volume, situating them within four broad sub-fields: vice epistemology, epistemic injustice, inter-personal epistemic practices, and applied epistemology. We also provide a brief overview of several other important growth areas in non-ideal epistemology.

This volume has its roots in two recent developments within mainstream analytic epistemology. The first has been an increasing recognition of the active and social nature of our epistemic lives. For most of the 20th century, the impression generated by the epistemological literature was of epistemic agents as generic and isolated individuals, more or less passively inheriting beliefs from their environments. It was these beliefs, and not the epistemic agents themselves, that served as the prime focus of epistemic analysis, with the two central questions in the field focussing on when it is that beliefs count as justified, and when it is they count as knowledge. This idea of our epistemic lives as something isolated or passive is, of course, a philosophical fiction; a useful one at times, perhaps, but a fiction nonetheless. Knowing, believing, and understanding, and the practices of inquiry, deliberation, and investigation that endow us with these states, are not just things that happen to us, but are very often things that we do, that require making choices about how to act or about what steps to take. What's more, they are things that we do together, in groups, as part of larger social networks and communities, and with our own particular identities and characters.

The recognition of our epistemic lives as something active and involving interaction with other epistemic agents has become a central part of epistemological theorising in the past couple of decades, as manifested in particular by the flourishing fields of social and virtue epistemology. The second development we wish to draw attention to remains somewhat more nascent. Inspired by the work of 20th century feminist epistemologists and drawing upon insights from moral and political philosophy, a growing number of theorists have begun to place at the centre of their work the insight

that, insofar as our epistemic lives involve things that we do, they involve things that we – both as individuals and as communities – can do *badly*. So, for example, whilst some people's epistemic activities are facilitated by epistemic virtues, others' are impeded by epistemic *vices*. Whilst certain groups find society geared towards their epistemic interests, others find large bodies of *ignorance* encapsulating topics that are of real significance to them. Whilst some find themselves treated fairly in their epistemic lives, others find themselves on the receiving end of distinctly epistemic *injustices*. And whilst the acquisition and sharing of knowledge is often supported by networks of trust, at other times the makeup of society and the state of social relations can leave people *unable to trust* those whom it is most in their interests to do so. When our epistemic practices break down in these ways, people are often harmed or wronged in various aspects of their lives – not just epistemically, but also socially, morally, and politically.

The increase in interest in these and other breakdowns in epistemic practice reflects a growing appreciation of the import of what we might think of as *non-ideal epistemology.*[1] This kind of epistemology focusses not on what our epistemic lives look like when everything runs as it should – on the nature of justification, the sources of knowledge, or the mechanisms of testimony and trust – but on what our epistemic lives look like when things go *wrong,* as they so often do. It thus encompasses topics like the epistemology of ignorance; disagreement; epistemic injustice; vice epistemology; the critical epistemology of race, gender, indigeneity, and disability; and various areas of applied and social epistemology. It examines what it means for our epistemic practices and activities to go wrong in these ways, why they do so, the epistemic and non-epistemic harms that follow, and the extent to which these harms are wrongful. Crucially, it also explores how we might try and respond to or ameliorate these harms and wrongs.

This volume assembles a collection of essays that offer a snapshot of the kinds of issues explored within non-ideal epistemology. We do not claim that this represents a cohesive field of study, still less that it forms a singular research project. The papers presented here cover a diverse range of topics, and do so by drawing upon a wide array of different theoretical resources. Nonetheless, they are united by a shared interest in the challenges, impediments, inequities, dangers, and failures that are part and parcel of our epistemic lives. The aim behind this volume, and the 2017 *Royal Institute of Philosophy* Departmental Conference at the University of Sheffield from which it originated, is that bringing together theorists with this shared interest in the negative could highlight the extent of the recent shift in this direction within epistemological theorising. In so doing, it could also illuminate new ways in which theorists from quite different sub-fields and exploring quite different issues could learn from and work with one another.

[1] The distinction between ideal and non-ideal theory in political theory is typically traced to John Rawls' *A Theory of Justice* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972). Charles W. Mills offers a powerful defence of the significance of non-ideal theory within political philosophy in his '"Ideal Theory" as Ideology', *Hypatia* **20** (2005), 165-184.

Our main task in the remainder of this introductory chapter is to provide an overview of the papers presented in this volume. We do so by ordering them loosely according to four central themes: vice epistemology, epistemic injustice, inter-personal epistemic practices, and applied epistemology. We also end by briefly detailing several important themes that are not directly covered by this volume, but which nonetheless represent significant growth areas in non-ideal epistemology. Carving the volume, and non-ideal epistemology more generally, according to these themes helps to lend some order to proceedings, but it should not be taken to signify any hard and fast divisions. Several of the papers included touch upon two or more of these themes, and they frequently speak to one another in ways that transcend these categories.

Vice Epistemology

One of the areas in which this recent uptake of interest in the non-ideal manifests itself is in the field of character-based, or 'responsibilist', virtue epistemology. The defining feature of virtue epistemology is its focus on the evaluation of epistemic agents, and specifically the exploration of what qualities make someone an excellent or deficient epistemic agent.[2] For much of its recent history, however, virtue epistemologists have focussed more or less exclusively on the epistemic virtues themselves, traits like open-mindedness, intellectual humility, conscientiousness, and diligence.[3] It is only in the past few years that sustained attention has been turned towards the (arguably more common) intellectual *vices*, traits like arrogance, dogmatism, negligence, and intellectual rigidity.[4]

The study of the intellectual vices specifically, what Quassim Cassam has referred to as 'vice epistemology', raises questions including what is it that makes a character trait intellectually vicious, what are the nature and effects of specific vices, and how do the intellectual vices relate to the intellectual virtues.[5] Two contributions to this volume

[2] Heather Battaly, 'Virtue Epistemology', *Philosophy Compass **3*** (2008), 639-663; John Turri, Mark Alfano, and John Greco, 'Virtue Epistemology', *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2018 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2018/entries/epistemology-virtue/>.

[3] Some relatively early exceptions to virtue epistemology's focus on the positive include: Casey Swank, 'Epistemic Vice', in Guy Axtell (ed.) *Knowledge, Belief, and Character: Readings in Contemporary Virtue Epistemology* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2000), 195-204; Miranda Fricker, *Epistemic Injustice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007). For discussion of why vice has been overlooked in the virtue epistemological literature, see Charlie Crerar, 'Motivational Approaches to Intellectual Vice', *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* (Forthcoming).

[4] A further, arguably related, non-ideal approach to virtue epistemology is represented by the *situationist* challenge, which employs psychological evidence to argue that true epistemic virtues are, in fact, vanishingly rare. See, for example, Mark Alfano, *Character as Moral Fiction* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2013); Lauren Olin and John M. Dorris, 'Vicious Minds', *Philosophical Studies* **168** (2014),665-692; Abrol Fairweather and Mark Alfano (eds.), *Epistemic Situationism* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2017).

[5] Quassim Cassam, 'Vice Epistemology', *The Monist* **99** (2016), 159-180. Other prominent works in vice epistemology include: Heather Battaly, 'Epistemic Virtue and Vice: Reliabilism, Responsibilsm, and Personalism' in Chienkuo Mi, Michael Slote, and Ernest Sosa (eds.), *Moral and Intellectual Virtues in Chinese and Western Philosophy: The Turn Towards Virtue* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2016), 99-120; Ian James Kidd, 'Charging Others with Epistemic Vice', *The Monist* **99** (2016) ,181-197; Alessandra Tanesini, '"Calm Down

engage directly with such issues. Heather Battaly's 'Can Closed-Mindedness be an Intellectual Virtue?' does so by raising the intriguing possibility that closed-mindedness, seemingly a paradigmatic vice that represents a 'popular favourite' for vice epistemologists,[6] might on occasion count as an intellectual *virtue*. Building upon an account of closed-mindedness as an 'unwillingness or inability to engage seriously with relevant intellectual options',[7] Battaly identifies three different conceptions of intellectual vice: effects-vice, responsibilist-vice, and personalist-vice. Focusing specifically on effects-vices, according to which traits are vicious 'whenever they produce a preponderance of bad epistemic effects (or fail to produce a preponderance of good epistemic effects),'[8] Battaly then illustrates how, in the normal case, closed-mindedness does generally meet this criterion. However, she goes on to note certain cases where acts of closed-mindedness might count as virtuous on account of the effects they produce, before drawing the still more provocative conclusion that, in epistemically hostile environments, the *disposition* to be closed-minded might count as virtuous. She ends by noting that, despite the apparent hostility of aspects of our present epistemic environment, we should be wary about using this argument to justify closed-mindedness in the actual world.

A different set of vices underpin Alessandra Tanesini's discussion in 'Caring for Esteem and Intellectual Reputation: Some Epistemic Benefits and Harms', though again the question of when a certain trait or quality counts as virtuous and when it counts as vicious serves as a major theme. The central notion of her discussion is *esteem*, which she characterises as 'a positive or negative attitude, directed at a person, group or institution for their good or bad qualities'.[9] After providing some initial discussion of esteem and the related notions of reputation and admiration, Tanesini goes on to argue that it is epistemically valuable: it both helps us make 'reasoned judgements about who to trust'in situations where we are relying on the expertise of others, [10] and can also be helpful in acquiring knowledge of one's own good qualities. Moreover, she goes on to argue that desiring esteem provides an incentive to raise performance, and that, as a consequence, esteem can be virtuously pursued. Not all desires for esteem are virtuous, however, and the final sections of Tanesini's paper explore two familiar vices of esteem: intellectual vanity, and intellectual timidity.

Epistemic Injustice

Dear": Intellectual Arrogance, Silencing, and Ignorance', *Aristotelian Society Supplementary Volume* **90** (2016), 71-92.

[6] Quassim Cassam, 'Vice Ontology', *Social Epistemology Review and Reply Collective* **6** (2017), 20-27, at 20.

[7] Heather Battaly, 'Can Closed-Mindedness be an Intellectual Virtue?', *Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplementary Volume* **84** (2018) PAGE REFERENCE THIS VOLUME.

[8] Battaly, 'Can Closed-Mindedness be an Intellectual Virtue?', PAGE REFERENCE TO THIS VOLUME.

[9] Alessandra Tanesini, 'Caring for Esteem and Intellectual Reputation: Some Epistemic Benefits and Harms', *Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplementary Volume* **84** (2018) PAGE REFERENCE TO THIS VOLUME.

[10] Tanesini, 'Caring for Esteem and Intellectual Reputation' PAGE REFERENCE TO THIS VOLUME.

In the last few decades, the topic of *epistemic oppression* has attracted significant philosophical attention. Drawing on previous work on various dimensions of oppressive power relations in feminist, anti-racist, post-colonial, Marxist, and other theoretical frames and activist movements, theorists have identified epistemic oppression as involving 'persistent epistemic exclusion that hinders one's contribution to knowledge production… an unwarranted infringement on the epistemic agency of knowers'.[11] One significant form of epistemic oppression discussed in several contributions to this volume is *epistemic injustice.*[12] This term was coined by Miranda Fricker to describe a type of 'wrong done to someone specifically in their capacity as a knower'.[13] Fricker describes two types of epistemic injustice. *Testimonial injustice* occurs where a speaker's testimony is understood but the hearer unfairly downgrades her credibility because of a prejudice against the speaker's social identity, wronging her in her capacity as a giver of knowledge.[14] *Hermeneutical injustice* occurs where a widespread absence of shared interpretive tools makes it difficult for the speaker's social experience to be understood in the first place, either by the hearer or even by the speaker herself, wronging her in her capacity as a giver or producer of knowledge.[15] Numerous other forms of epistemic injustice have been identified in connection with, for example, wilful ignorance of marginalised groups' hermeneutical resources, the distribution of epistemic goods, and the undermining of one's ability to participate in inquiry.[16] There has also been some significant work applying various concepts of epistemic injustice to concrete cases, such

[11] Kristie Dotson, 'Conceptualizing Epistemic Oppression', *Social Epistemology* **28** (2014), 115–38, at 115. Examples of early articulations of this kind of idea are found in Marilyn Frye, *The Politics of Reality: Essays in Feminist Theory* (Berkeley, CA: The Crossing Press, 1983); Audre Lorde, *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches,* (Freedom, CA: The Crossing Press, 1984); Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, 'Can the Subaltern Speak?', in C. Nelson & L. Grossberg (eds.), *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture* (Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 271–313; Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2009), 1st ed. published 1991; Lorraine Code, *Rhetorical Spaces: Essays on Gendered Locations* (London: Routledge, 1995); Charles W. Mills, *The Racial Contract* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999); María Lugones, *Pilgrimages/Peregrinajes: Theorizing Coalition Against Multiple Oppressions* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003). Types of epistemic oppression other than epistemic injustice have been discussed in, for example, Kristie Dotson, 'Tracking Epistemic Violence, Tracking Practices of Silencing', *Hypatia* **26** (2011), 236–57; José Medina, *The Epistemology of Resistance: Gender and Racial Oppression, Epistemic Injustice, and Resistant Imaginations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Nora Berenstain, 'Epistemic Exploitation', *Ergo* **3** (2016), 569–90.

[12] For a comprehensive overview of work on epistemic injustice, see Ian James Kidd, José Medina, and Gaile Pohlhaus (eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Epistemic Injustice* (London: Routledge, 2017).

[13] Fricker, *Epistemic Injustice*, 1.

[14] See also Jeremy Wanderer, 'Addressing Testimonial Injustice: Being Ignored and Being Rejected', *Philosophical Quarterly* **62** (2012), 148–169; Gaile Pohlhaus, 'Discerning the Primary Epistemic Harm in Cases of Testimonial Injustice', *Social Epistemology* **28** (2014), 99–114; Emmalon Davis, 'Typecasts, Tokens, and Spokespersons: A Case for Credibility Excess as Testimonial Injustice' *Hypatia* **31** (2016), 485–501.

[15] See also Rebecca Mason, 'Two Kinds of Unknowing', *Hypatia* **26** (2011), 294–307; Charlie Crerar, 'Taboo, Hermeneutical Injustice, and Expressively Free Environments', *Episteme* **13** (2016), 195–207; Trystan S. Goetze, 'Hermeneutical Dissent and the Species of Hermeneutical Injustice', *Hypatia* **33** (2018), 73–90.

[16] Gaile Pohlhaus, 'Relational Knowing and Epistemic Injustice: Toward a Theory of Willful Hermeneutical Ignorance', *Hypatia* **27** (2012), 715–35; Kristie Dotson, 'A Cautionary Tale: On Limiting Epistemic Oppression', *Frontiers: A Journal of Women's Studies* **33** (2012), 24–47; David Coady, 'Two Concepts of Epistemic Injustice', *Episteme* **7** (2012), 101–113; Christopher Hookway, 'Some Varieties of Epistemic Injustice: Reflections on Fricker', *Episteme* **7** (2010), 151–63.

as educational justice, rape and domestic abuse myths, and healthcare practices concerning intersex patients.[17]

The usual focus in the epistemic injustice literature is on ways we can be wronged in our capacity as givers and producers of knowledge. In her contribution, 'Understanding Epistemic Trust Injustices and Their Harms', Heidi Grasswick inverts this approach, focussing instead on wrongs experienced in one's capacity as a *receiver* of knowledge. In the process, she identifies a new class of epistemic injustices: *epistemic trust injustices*. She concentrates in particular on the ways in which epistemic trust injustices arise in interactions between expert and lay communities, especially between scientists and marginalised social groups. As Grasswick argues, 'scientific knowledge is an especially important case to examine with respect to epistemic injustices... it is a dominant and powerful form of knowing in contemporary society, with deep significance for the structure of our social and material lives'.[18] Given the importance of scientific knowledge, and the division of intellectual labour that specialised knowledge production entails, relationships of epistemic trust are essential. In order to trust responsibly, we must exercise our epistemic agency by judging which speakers and which groups of putative experts deserve our trust. Doing so with regard to scientific communities, Grasswick argues, involves not just identifying their ability to provide us with significant knowledge, but also whether they sincerely care for our interests in producing and sharing their knowledge. Epistemic trust injustices arise when it is impossible to responsibly place one's trust in scientific experts on account of their having historically failed to meet the conditions of trust *vis-à-vis* one's social group, as is often the case for those in marginalised communities. As Grasswick shows, this harms the subjects of epistemic trust injustices in their capacity as receivers of knowledge, and produces a negative feedback loop where similar injustices recur because lay communities disengage from expert inquiry altogether. Grasswick closes with a few suggestions for addressing epistemic trust injustices by repairing expert–lay relations and increasing the participation of marginalized communities in scientific inquiry.

Alison Bailey's 'On Anger, Silence, and Epistemic Injustice' uses feminist theory, particularly work on epistemic oppression by feminists of colour, to explore the place and role of *anger* in epistemic injustice. Starting from the observation that 'anger is the emotion of injustice'.[19] Bailey sketches the ways in which epistemic oppression provokes anger, how mechanisms similar to those that silence and dismiss marginalised speakers'

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[17] Ben Kotzee, 'Educational Justice, Epistemic Justice, and Leveling Down', *Educational Theory* **63** (2013), 331–50; Katharine Jenkins, 'Rape Myths and Domestic Abuse Myths as Hermeneutical Injustices', *Journal of Applied Philosophy* **34** (2017), 191–205; Teri Merrick, 'From 'Intersex' to 'DSD': A Case of Epistemic Injustice', *Synthese* (forthcoming).

[18] Heidi Grasswick, 'Understanding Epistemic Trust Injustices', *Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplementary Volume* **84** (2018) PAGE REFERENCE THIS VOLUME.

[19] Alison Bailey, 'On Anger, Silence, and Epistemic Injustice', Royal Institute of Philosophy *Supplementary Volume* **84** (2018) PAGE REFERENCE THIS VOLUME.

testimony also work to cool and dismiss their anger, and how holding on to one's anger in the face of injustice is an important and useful tool for resisting oppression. In the process, she introduces a variety of vivid concepts and distinctions, such as María Lugones's distinction between anger that is hard-to-handle because it is *heavy* – frustrating and exhausting in the face of repeated failures to be taken seriously – and anger that is hard-to-handle because it is *rebellious* – disorderly because directed against existing social and epistemic structures that make it difficult to be taken seriously in the first place.[20] Other distinctions are Bailey's own, such as the difference between two ways in which the anger of oppressed people is managed: *tone policing,* which identifies moments of anger and silences them as irrational or improper, and *tone vigilance,* which looks for anger before it is even expressed on the basis of the speaker's social identity. Bailey stitches together these distinctions – what she calls different 'textures' of anger – to give a multifaceted picture of *knowing resistant anger,* a kind of righteous anger directed against oppression on the basis of one's knowledge of one's own social experience, despite persistent obstacles to having both one's knowledge and one's anger taken seriously within dominant interpretive frames.

Inter-Personal Epistemic Practices

One of the key insights that motivated the turn towards theorising the social dimensions of epistemology was the significance of familiar inter-personal interactions, communications, and exchanges for our epistemic lives and conduct. What is striking about the early analytic work in this area, however, is the extent to which discussion of our socio-epistemic practices initially focussed (and, to some extent, still focusses) upon the internal mental states of the agents involved in such interactions, and how little it explores the ways in which those interactions actually play out within public and social spaces. The literature on disagreement, for instance, has primarily concerned the question of how, and if, epistemic agents should revise their beliefs and other doxastic states in the face of disagreement.[21] Similarly, much of the work on testimony has

[20] See Lugones, *Pilgrimages/Peregrinajes*.

[21] For a snapshot of the debate on disagreement, see Richard Feldman and Ted Warfield (eds.), *Disagreement* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010) and David Christensen & Jennifer Lackey (eds.), *The Epistemology of Disagreement: New Essays* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013). For work on disagreement with and between *groups*, see J. Adam Carter, 'Group Peer Disagreement', *Ratio* **27** (2014), 11-28; Bryan Frances, *Disagreement* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2014); Mattias Skipper and Asbjørn Steglich-Petersen, 'Group Disagreement: A Belief Aggregation Perspective', *Synthese* (forthcoming); David Christensen, 'Disagreement and Public Controversy', in Jennifer Lackey (ed.), *Essays in Collective Epistemology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 143-163. For work on *deep* disagreement, where disagreements in belief can be explained by underlying differences in the norms, principles, and commitments that shape the disputant's epistemic practices, see Klemens Kappel, 'The Problem of Deep Disagreement', *Discipline Filosofiche* **22** (2014), 7-25; Michael P. Lynch, 'Epistemic Circularity and Epistemic Disagreement', in Adrian Haddock, Alan Millar and Duncan Pritchard (eds.), *Social Epistemology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 262-277; Alvin Goldman, 'Epistemic Relativism and Reasonable Disagreement', in Feldman & Warfield (eds.), *Disagreement* 187-215. Four examples of recent work taking the debate in new directions are Helen De Cruz and John De Smedt, 'The Value of Epistemic Disagreement in Scientific Practice: The Case of Homo Floresiensis', *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science Part A* **44** (2013), 169-177; Paul Faulkner, 'Agency and Disagreement', in Patrick Reider (ed.) *Social Epistemology and*

focussed upon theorising the conditions and mechanisms by which knowledge or warranted belief can be acquired via the testimony of others.[22] Yet, if we are to fully appreciate the ways in which our social-epistemic practices not only benefit but also disadvantage (and even harm) those involved, then we need to pay attention to the fact that these practices do not occur in the cold calm of the perfect epistemic agent's mind. Rather, they occur 'out in the open': in public, social, sometimes vexed, and often complicated interactions and exchanges between people.

The three contributions to this section of the volume can all be seen as contributing to a reorientation of social epistemology to more avowedly grapple with the interpersonal aspects of epistemic practice in the ways just outlined. Casey Rebecca Johnson, in 'Just Say "No!": Obligations to Voice Disagreement', does so by bringing new focus to the debate on disagreement. Departing from the conventional approach to discussing disagreement, Johnson asks not what the individual's doxastic response to discovering disagreement should be, but what she should do in the public and social space in which she realises that disagreement. Is it permissible, in the face of disagreement, to stay quiet and keep her opinions to herself? Or, is she obliged to make her opinions a matter of public record? Johnson argues the case for the latter. Not only are we *obliged* to make it known that we disagree with others, but often we are *epistemically* obliged to do so. Drawing on David Lewis's conception of the 'conversational scoreboard', Johnson argues that when in a situation of disagreement, one must express content that at least 'appears to be' incompatible with what one took to be objectionable; and, crucially, one must make that sentiment of disagreement clear to at least some of the other participants in the original conversation. Importantly, Johnson explains, the obligation to make one's dissent public in this way is defeasible and can be overridden by prudential and moral considerations, as well as epistemic ones. In the final section of the paper, Johnson considers four potential sources for this obligation: epistemic well-being; the nature of inquiry; commitments to joint action; and the nature of doxastic justification.[23]

Epistemic Agency: Decentralizing the Epistemic Agent (London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016), 75-90; Jonathan Matheson, 'Disagreement: Idealized and Everyday', in Jonathan Matheson and Rico Ortiz (eds.), *The Ethics of Belief* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 315-330; Fabienne Peter, 'The Epistemic Circumstances of Democracy', in Miranda Fricker and Michael Brady (eds.), *The Epistemic Life of Groups* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 133-149.

[22] For a summary of the debate on testimony, see Jennifer Lackey, 'Testimonial Knowledge' in, Sven Bernecker and Duncan Pritchard (eds.), *The Routledge Companion to Epistemology* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 316-334. Recently, a number of robustly inter-personal accounts of testimony have been forwarded, including Richard Moran, *The Exchange of Words: Speech, Testimony, and Intersubjectivity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018); Paul Faulkner, *Knowledge on Trust* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); Sanford Goldberg, *Relying on Others: An Essay in Epistemology*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010). See also more general discussion of the inter-personal nature of trust, including: Annette Baier, 'Trust and Antitrust', *Ethics* **96** (1986), 231-260; Paul Faulkner, 'The Practical Rationality of Trust', *Synthese 191* (2014), 1975-1989; Richard Holton, 'Deciding to Trust, Coming to Believe', *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* **72** (1994), 63-76; Katherine Hawley, 'Partiality and Prejudice in Trusting', *Synthese* **191** (2014), 2029-2045; Karen Jones, 'Trust as an Affective Attitude', **Ethics** *107* (1996), 4-25.

[23] For other recent work on the public problem of disagreement, see Jennifer Lackey, 'The Duty to Object', *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* (forthcoming); Casey Johnson (ed.), *Voicing Dissent: The Ethics and Epistemology of Making Disagreement Public*, (New York: Routledge, 2018)

Olivia Bailey turns our attention towards another fundamental epistemic practice – testimony – in her contribution 'On Empathy and Testimonial Trust'. Bailey's focus is upon testimonial exchanges that involve speakers who belong to one or more oppressed groups. By drawing out the complex relationship between empathy and trust in these cases, Bailey reveals the importance of theorising testimony in terms of the personal and social dynamics between recipient and speaker, not only its narrow epistemic function of transferring knowledge and warranted belief. Empathy, in the sense that interests Bailey, is a 'form of emotionally-charged imaginative perspective-taking'.[24] It is a way to understand the world as others experience it, to 'walk a mile in their shoes', as the idiom goes. 'Testimonial trust', as Bailey understands it, is a robustly interpersonal stance whereby one comes to believe the content of another's testimony *at their word*, without independently verifying that what they say is true. In the first half of the paper, Bailey explores the ways in which empathy can support testimonial trust by providing evidence as to the speaker's epistemic competence, particularly in cases that involve what Bailey calls 'testimony about experience'. This support represents a clear upshot to empathy's role in testimony. In the second half of the chapter, however, Bailey carefully draws out the darker side to the relationship between empathy and testimonial trust. In cases where a speaker belongs to one or more oppressed groups, Bailey explains, an unwavering or incautious reliance on empathy can lead to a double failure on the part of the recipient of testimony: firstly, to recognise the limitations of their epistemic perspective and imaginative capacities; and secondly, to respect the personal and moral significance of the speaker's investment in the testimonial exchange. With this in mind, Bailey lays out the case that – for all of the benefits of empathy – it can sometimes be morally and epistemically responsible to 'trust without empathy'.[25]

In a departure from the previous two chapters' focus on the core socio-epistemic practices of testimony and disagreement, Miranda Fricker's 'Ambivalence About Forgiveness' explores the epistemic functions, and possible degradations, of two inter-personal *moral* practices: blame and forgiveness. Fricker explains that blame and other mechanisms of moral accountability have a social constructive power that functions *proleptically*. By treating a wrongdoer as if she already shares one's moral outlook, in other words, one can thereby effect a change in the wrongdoer's moral understanding such that she comes to share one's outlook. But, at the same time, blame can degenerate into moral-epistemic domination, where the blamer shuts down the possibility of dialogue over the nature of the wrong committed, brow-beating the blamee into accepting the blamer's outlook. Similarly, forgiveness – particularly the form Fricker calls 'gifted forgiveness', where the wronged party lets go of her feelings of resentment without any redemptive change on the part of the wrongdoer – can also bring about a change in the wrongdoer's moral understanding by treating her as if she already shares

[24] Olivia Bailey, 'On Empathy and Testimonial Trust' *Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplementary Volume* **84** (2018) PAGE REFERENCE THIS VOLUME.
[25] Olivia Bailey, 'On Empathy and Testimonial Trust' PAGE REFERENCE THIS VOLUME.

the forgiver's outlook. Again, this proleptic mechanism has the potential for abuse. A gift of forgiveness can shut down the alleged wrongdoer's ability to contest or question the nature of the harm, pre-empting moral dialogue and twisting the forgiven person into acquiescing to the forgiver's outlook. The potential for moral-epistemic domination is heightened when the forgiver and forgiven are on either side of an imbalance of social power, further undermining the forgiven person's ability to challenge the forgiver's moral understanding. Forgiveness can also mask or smuggle in feelings of blame, short-circuiting the normal processes by which such resentment is communicated and forsworn.

Applied Epistemology

Once one scratches beneath the surface, one often finds that the distinction between applied and non-applied philosophy (or, certainly, applied and 'theoretical' philosophy) to be a fairly spurious one. That is certainly the case for this volume, in which each of the papers included explores some recognisable way in which our epistemic lives, as individuals and as communities, malfunction or go wrong. Our choosing to demarcate a number of the papers specifically as applied epistemology should therefore be taken with more than a pinch of salt. Nonetheless, we do so because each of these papers contributes to a particular recent trend within epistemology: the bringing of epistemological insights to bear on important and detailed case studies. This has seen epistemologists turn their attention towards an increasingly diverse array of issues, including the use of the internet,[26] the nature of fake news,[27] and the epistemic standards of Anglo-American legal systems.[28] The three papers of this section each undertake a similarly insightful applied analysis.[29]

The section opens with Quassim Cassam's paper 'The Epistemology of Terrorism and Radicalisation', which explores some of the epistemic practices in operation within counter-terrorism theory and practice. Specifically, he considers two popular answers to the question, 'what leads a person to turn to political violence?':[30] the Rational Agent Model (RAM), according to which terrorists are rational agents who turn to violence as a means for pursuing their political ends; and the Radicalisation Model (RAD), according to which people turn to political violence because they have been radicalised. Both views,

[26] Hanna Gunn and Michael P. Lynch, 'Google Epistemology', in David Coady (ed.) *The Routledge Handbook of Applied Epistemology* (New York: Routledge, Forthcoming); Richard Heersmink, 'A Virtue Epistemology of the Internet', Social Epistemology 32 (2018), 1-12.
[27] Regina Rini, 'Fake News and Partisan Epistemology', *Kennedy Institute of Ethics Journal* **27** (2017) 43-64; Axel Gelfert 'Fake News: A Definition', *Informal Logic* **38** (2018), 84-117.
[28] Georgi Gardiner, 'In Defence of Reasonable Doubt', *Journal of Applied Philosophy* **34** (2017), 221-241.
[29] For more contributions to applied epistemology, see: David Coady, *What To Believe Now: Applying Epistemology to Contemporary Issues* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell 2012); David Coady and Miranda Fricker (eds.), Special Issue on Applied Epistemology, *Social Epistemology* **34** (2017); David Coady and James Chase (eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Applied Epistemology* (New York: Routledge Forthcoming).
[30] Quassim Cassam, The Epistemology of Terrorism and Radicalisation', *Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplementary Volume* **83** (2018) PAGE REFERENCE TO THIS VOLUME.

Cassam argues, are flawed. RAM, although of some value, is unable to explain cases where terrorism is inefficacious and it is patently irrational to believe that it could have been otherwise. RAD, more seriously, faces significant theoretical difficulties about what it means to be 'vulnerable' to radicalisation, since given the 'multiple highly personal and idiosyncratic pathways to behavioural radicalisation' it is highly unlikely there is any such thing as *the* radicalisation process.[31] Cassam's preferred alternative to RAM and RAD is a view he calls Moderate Epistemic Particularism (MEP), a view that seeks not to *explain* the turn to political violence in a way that will allow us to uncover general causal laws, but to *understand* particular instances of it. This view is 'moderate', Cassam notes, because it does not deny the possibility of drawing interesting generalisations about the turn to political violence. The point, instead, is that we should recognise the limitations of these generalisations in the face of human particularity.

Ian James Kidd and Havi Carel's 'Healthcare Practice, Epistemic Injustice, and Naturalism' applies insights from the literature on epistemic injustice to the field of healthcare, revealing a number of ways in which ill persons are wronged in their capacity as knowers. Drawing on works by phenomenologists of illness and biographical accounts of the experience of illness, Kidd and Carel present a number of these *pathocentric epistemic injustices,* which are ultimately connected to the very conception of health at work in most healthcare settings. They show how ill persons experience testimonial injustice, because of prejudices arising from 'pathophobia', or negative attitudes towards illness or ill persons. Pathocentric testimonial injustice not only wrongs ill persons as givers of knowledge, but can also lead to serious harms when ill persons' testimony regarding their treatment in the healthcare system is not taken seriously by healthcare providers. The issue is compounded by pathocentric hermeneutical injustices, which arise because there is a lack of adequate shared vocabulary for discussing the experience of illness, and a common distaste, even among healthcare professionals, for discussing suffering and death. These injustices are persistent because ill persons are often excluded from participation in the processes by which healthcare professionals develop shared understandings of illness. One root of the problem, Kidd and Carel explain, is that our very concept of health is excessively naturalistic, focused on functional biological aspects at the expense of the lived experience of illness and health. They argue that naturalistic conceptions of health may promote or even necessitate the pathocentric epistemic injustices they describe.

In the final paper of the volume, Keith Harris contributes to ongoing discussion about the epistemic merits of belief in conspiracy theories,[32] as he asks 'What is

[31] Cassam, 'The Epistemology of Terrorism and Radicalisation', PAGE REFERENCE TO THIS VOLUME.
[32] See, for instance, David Coady (ed.), *Conspiracy Theories: The Philosophical Debate*, (London: Routledge, 2007); Dentith, Matthew, *The Philosophy of Conspiracy Theories*. (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); Feldman, Susan, 'Counterfact Conspiracy Theories', *International Journal of Applied Philosophy* **25** (2011),15-24; M. R. X. Dentith and Brian Keeley. 'The applied epistemology of conspiracy theories: An overview' in Coady and Chase (eds.), Routledge Handbook on Applied Epistemology.

Epistemically Wrong with Conspiracy Theorising?' Harris focusses his discussion on the subset of conspiracy theories that offer explanations of events that run counter to official accounts, as well as implicating the supposed architects of the events in question in the promotion of the official accounts. Outlandish as some theories of this sort might be, Harris is careful to point out, they sometimes turn out to be true. Likewise, it will be reasonable for at least some people to believe some theories of this sort. If there is a problem with belief in conspiracy theories so defined, then it seems reasonable to suppose that it lies with the practices and forms of reasoning by which those beliefs often came to be held, not in the content of the beliefs themselves. Harris considers three explanations of what the problem with such 'conspiracy theorising' might be: that it typically manifests epistemic vice; that it leads to belief in unfalsifiable theories; and that it is akin to adherence to 'degenerating research programmes' in science. All three explanations, Harris argues, are unsatisfying, since each fails to pick out any failing that is characteristic of 'conspiracy theorising' and not equally characteristic of the theorising that leads to belief in supposedly more acceptable theories. In the second half of the paper, Harris offers his own suggestions for where the errors in conspiracy theorising might lie. These are two. Firstly, conspiracy theorists may employ a fallacious probabilistic form of *modus tollens* that leads to placing undue weight upon data that is 'errant with respect to the official account'.[33] Secondly, conspiracy theorists may display 'a sort of higher-order epistemic vice' that comes when an otherwise admirable devotion to inquiry is combined with a lack of attention to one's own biases and possibilities for error.[34]

Other Themes in Non-Ideal Epistemology

Owing to its origins in a two-day conference, this volume regrettably could not touch on every issue within the ambit of non-ideal epistemology. However, given our ambition to highlight the breadth and range of excellent work in this area, several other major themes bear mentioning. Whilst several of these topics represent currently flourishing areas of research within non-ideal epistemology, others represent areas for growth as research in this field continues to develop.

In addition to investigations of epistemic injustice in interactions between scientists and lay communities, as explored in Grasswick's contribution to this volume, there is growing interest in *socially relevant philosophy of science* more generally. Much like epistemology, over the 20th Century philosophy of science broadly concentrated on theoretical issues divorced from the social contexts in which scientific inquiry proceeds and in which scientific knowledge is used. Contemporary philosophers of science, however, are increasingly concerned not only with giving accounts of the nature of scientific knowledge or its background metaphysics, but also with how scientific inquiry

[33] Keith Harris, 'What is epistemically wrong with conspiracy theorising?', *Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplementary Volume* **84** (2018) PAGE REFERENCE THIS VOLUME.
[34] Harris, 'What is epistemically wrong with conspiracy theorising?', PAGE REFERENCE TO THIS VOLUME.

should be organized in order to serve the interests of local communities and whole societies, as well as the moral, political, and epistemic problems that can arise when science fails in these roles.[35] As Carla Fehr and Kathryn Plaisance argue, doing more work of this kind stands to benefit society, scientific practice, and philosophical inquiry itself, but requires a re-orientation of philosophy of science as a field towards non-ideal theory and socially engaged research.[36]

Another topic neglected by mainstream epistemology until recently is the topic of *ignorance.* One important set of questions concern the *nature* of ignorance; for example, is ignorance the contrary of knowledge, of true belief, or something different?[37] Merely leaving discussion of ignorance there, however, obscures many complexities. Whilst *culpability* for one's ignorance has been discussed in moral philosophy in connection with the epistemic condition on moral responsibility,[38] there is seldom any engagement with relevant epistemological questions, such as the availability of evidence to the agent and the extent of the agent's epistemic obligations in deciding how to act.[39] Moreover, under certain conditions, ignorant beliefs can flourish with all the same respect that ought to be carried by knowledge. Such ignorance is not merely a passive lack of knowledge but an active and persistent impediment to true belief. This is particularly concerning where social injustice and ignorance walk in stride, enabling and reinforcing one another. Charles Mills coined the term *epistemology of ignorance* to describe such structures as they arise in societies implicitly or explicitly structured on racism.[40] Much remains to be done on the topic of ignorance, its various forms, and how this decidedly non-ideal topic connects with moral and political issues.[41]

In the present political situation of increased polarization of opinion, cynicism about the potential for rational dialogue between opposing viewpoints, politicisation of expertise, and propagandistic disinformation masquerading as reliable news, practices of

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[35] See, for example, Phillip Kitcher, *Science, Truth, and Democracy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); Janet A. Kourany, 'A Philosophy of Science for the Twenty-First Century'. *Philosophy of Science* **70** (2003), 1-14; Kathryn Plaisance and Carla Fehr (eds.), Special Issue: Making Philosophy of Science More Socially Relevant, *Synthese* **177** (2010); Nancy Arden McHugh, *The Limits of Knowledge: Generating Pragmatist Feminist Cases for Situated Knowing* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2015).

[36] Carla Fehr and Kathryn Plaisance, 'Socially Relevant Philosophy of Science: An Introduction', *Synthese* **177** (2010), 301-316.

[37] For a recent collection discussing this and related questions, see Rik Peels and Martijn Blaauw (eds.), *The Epistemic Dimensions of Ignorance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

[38] See, among others, Holly M. Smith, 'Culpable Ignorance', *The Philosophical Review* **92** (1983), 543–71; Gideon Rosen, 'Culpability and Ignorance', *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* **103** (2003), 61–84; George Sher, *Who Knew? Responsibility Without Awareness* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

[39] An exception is Rik Peels, 'What Kind of Ignorance Excuses? Two Neglected Issues', *Philosophical Quarterly* **64** (2014), 478–96.

[40] Charles W. Mills, *The Racial Contract* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997). See also Nancy Tuana and Shannon Sullivan (eds.), Special Issue: Feminist Epistemologies of Ignorance, *Hypatia* **21** (2006); Shannon Sullivan and Nancy Tuana (eds.), *Race and Epistemologies of Ignorance* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2007).

[41] See also Cynthia Townley, *A Defence of Ignorance: Its Value for Knowers and Roles in Feminist and Social Epistemologies* (Lanham, ND: Lexington, 2011).

epistemic accountability take on renewed importance. However, work in this area seems largely concerned with classical epistemological questions about epistemic obligations and justification, and questions inherited from moral philosophy about whether belief, like action, must be voluntary for us to be blameworthy for getting things wrong.[42] While the notion of epistemic blame and epistemic culpability as notions distinct from their moral counterparts are assumed in some of the literature on epistemic injustice and intellectual vices, accounts of the conditions for being blamed in a specifically epistemic way are uncommon.[43] Given the role of moral accountability in bringing us to shared moral understandings, we might expect its epistemic analogue to be similarly useful in overcoming differences of opinion in the political arena. At the very least, we may hope that in holding the epistemically irresponsible to account, we may prevent or mitigate the spread of false and misleading information. A non-ideal approach to these epistemological issues is sorely needed to address associated social and political problems.

Some of the issues discussed above, such as hermeneutical injustice and the pernicious effects of a naturalistic conception of health, point to a way our epistemic practices can go wrong in a cognitively deeper way than issues arising at the level of knowledge production, testimony, or intellectual character traits. Namely, sometimes things go wrong at the level of the very *concepts* we use to construct our beliefs and other attitudes. As Alexis Burgess and David Plunkett argue, 'what concepts we have fixes what thoughts we can think… our conceptual repertoire determines… what beliefs we can have'.[44] But the issue goes well beyond the doxastic: the concepts we have limit 'what hypotheses we can entertain, what desires we can form, what plans we can make on the basis of such mental states, and accordingly constrains what we can hope to accomplish in the world'.[45] When our concepts go wrong, our epistemic practices and everything that follows therefrom can be radically misdirected. There is growing attention in analytic philosophy to questions regarding the critique and revision of our concepts, referred to variously as *conceptual engineering,*[46] *conceptual ethics,*[47] and *ameliorative inquiry.*[48] Such work has always been a part of philosophy, but conceptual analysis was for most of

[42] See, for example, Margery Bedford Naylor, 'Epistemic Justification', *American Philosophical Quarterly* **25** (1988), 49–58; William Alston, 'The Deontological Conception of Justification', *Philosophical Perspectives* **2** (1988), 257–99; Richard Feldman, 'Voluntary Belief and Epistemic Evaluation', in Matthias Steup (ed.), *Knowledge, Truth, and Duty: Essays on Epistemic Justification, Responsibility, and Virtue* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 77–92.

[43] An exception is Lindsay Rettler, 'In Defense of Doxastic Blame' *Synthese* **195** (2018), 2205–26. An argument against there being a distinctively epistemic form of blame is in Antti Kauppinen, 'Epistemic Norms and Epistemic Accountability', *Philosophers' Imprint* **18** (2018), 1–16.

[44] Alexis Burgess and David Plunkett, 'Conceptual Ethics I', *Philosophy Compass* **8** (2013), 1091–1101, at 1096.

[45] Burgess and Plunkett, 'Conceptual Ethics I', 1096-7.

[46] Herman Cappelen, *Fixing Language: An Essay on Conceptual Engineering,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018).

[47] Burgess and Plunkett, 'Conceptual Ethics I'.

[48] Sally Haslanger, *Resisting Reality: Social Construction and Social Critique*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

the 20th century conceived along similar abstract lines to ideal theory in epistemology. More recent work takes seriously the epistemic, social, and political effects of both the concepts we have inherited and our efforts to improve them, as can be seen in work on our concepts of gender,[49] sexual orientation,[50] and the law.[51] There is room for considerably more work in this area, regarding both the development of theories of conceptual change and conceptual error, and detailed studies of further cases of concepts that have gone wrong.

Finally, a recurring issue in the background of most of the papers in this volume is the *epistemological relevance of social identity,* particularly where oppressive power relations are at work, as is nearly always the case in actual, non-ideal conditions. This theme reflects ongoing research in the critical epistemology of race, gender, sexuality, disability, indigeneity, and other axes of oppression.[52] Indeed, many movements within non-ideal epistemology are rooted in concerns brought to light by theory and activism in these various and often intersecting lines of inquiry. By critically examining how social identities and stereotypes influence the production of knowledge and belief, in both academic and lay settings, non-ideal epistemology from these perspectives can reveal biases that contribute to epistemic and other forms of oppression. However, these critical approaches have historically been marginalized within analytic philosophy, and to some extent remain so.[53] Improving the philosophical understanding of our epistemic practices and of the non-ideal conditions in which all of us exercise our epistemic agency requires serious engagement with the overlooked perspectives and experiences explored by these critical approaches.

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[49] Sally Haslanger, 'Gender and Race: (What) Are They? (What) Do We Want Them to Be?', *Noûs* **34** (2000), 31–55; Jenkins, Katharine, 'Amelioration and Inclusion: Gender Identity and the Concept of Woman', *Ethics* **126** (2016), 394–421.

[50] Robin A. Dembroff, 'What Is Sexual Orientation?' *Philosophers' Imprint* **16** (2016), 1–27; Esa Diaz-Leon, 'Sexual Orientation as Interpretation? Sexual Desires, Concepts, and Choice', *Journal of Social Ontology* **3** (2017), 231-248.

[51] Natalie Stoljar, 'What Do We Want Law to Be? Philosophical Analysis and the Concept of Law', in Wil Waluchow and Stefan Sciaraffa (eds.), *Philosophical Foundations of the Nature of Law* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

[52] See, in addition to works cited in fn. 11 above, Donna Haraway, 'Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective', *Feminist Studies* **14** (1988), 575–99; Lorraine Code, *What Can She Know? Feminist Theory and Construction of Knowledge* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991); Charles W. Mills, 'Alternative Epistemologies', in *Blackness Visible: Essays on Philosophy and Race* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998), 21–39; Linda Alcoff and Elizabeth Potter (eds.), *Feminist Epistemologies* (London: Routledge, 1993); Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978); Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *The Epistemology of the Closet* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1990); Willie Ermine, 'Aboriginal Epistemology', in M. Battiste and J. Barman (eds.), *First Nations Education in Canada: The Circle Unfolds,* (Vancouver, BC: University of British Columbia Press, 2000), 101–111; Anita Silvers, "Feminist Perspectives on Disability", *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2016 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2016/entries/feminism-disability/>, §3.

[53] Phyllis Rooney, 'The Marginalization of Feminist Epistemology and What That Reveals About Epistemology "Proper"', in Heidi Grasswick (ed.), *Feminist Epistemology and Philosophy of Science* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2011), 3-24; Kristie Dotson, 'How is This Paper Philosophy?', *Comparative Philosophy* **3** (2012), 3–29; Katharine Jenkins, '"That's Not Philosophy": Feminism, Academia and the Double Bind', *Journal of Gender Studies* **23** (2014), 262–74.

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